

CRITICAL
AND
POETICAL WORKS,

By J. PENN, Esq.

On Thracia's hill, the Lord of war,
Has curb'd the fury of his car,
And dropt his thirsty lance at THY command.

PROGRESS OF POESY.

LONDON:

PRINTED FOR ELMSLY, STRAND; FAULDER, BOND-
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1797.

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A
TRANSLATION
OF
RANIERI DI CALSABIGI'S
LETTER
TO COUNT ALFIERI, ON
TRAGEDY.

WITH NOTES.

THE NOTES
By J. PENN, Esq.

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LETTERS BY CASSANOVA

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TO COUNT ALBERT, ON

TRAGEDY

WITH NOTES

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By J. P. N. P.

LONDON

PRINTED BY HENRY, STATIONER, LONDON

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1797

ON TRAGEDY.

I DO not know, my dear Count, whether I ought rather to congratulate you, or Italy in general, upon the four excellent tragedies which you have lately printed; wherein you afford us the expectation of seeing some other pieces published, as you declare in the first volume with which you have favoured me.

You have composed a rich treasure for us Italians, who have hitherto been so miserably poor in tragedy, as well as for the English, who are equally deficient with ourselves; with the exception, not of any entire plays, which are as bad as our own, but of some sublime passages of the illustrious Shakespeare. You will also be of use to the French themselves, who, since they have lost Crebillon and Voltaire, have sunk to a very low state, without any immediate probability of rising from it.

B

If I may presume to make the assertion, my honoured friend,

Dixisti insigne, recens et adhuc
Indictum ore alio.

———— New-born glories
Wake *thy* soul, inspire *thy* tongue.

BOSCAWEN.

How many writers will henceforth apply to you for new and theatrical situations; for characters drawn from the life, with a bold and masterly pencil; and for vigorous, energetic, and laconic expressions. How many of your single thoughts will be wiredrawn into entire periods, and even entire scenes. You teach us,

Magnumque loqui, nitique cothurno;

The buskin'd actor with *his* spirit fraught,
To breathe with dignity the lofty thought.

COLMAN.

You strip our Tragic Muse of the rags in which she has been hitherto shamefully clothed. You console us for the wretched state of our theatre; and you put us in possession of that rich and elegant dress, clothed

in which we may shew ourselves not inferior to that nation, which hitherto has justly looked upon us with an eye of compassion, and deserved contempt.

If any one, my dear friend, will patiently attempt to read those few Italian tragedies, which having been separated from the immense number of their deformed sisters, are printed with the haughty title of *select*, and are proposed as models for imitation; if, I say, he makes an effort to peruse them from beginning to end, what will he find? Deformed, complicated, perplexed, and improbable plans; and an erroneous disposition of the parts; useless persons; want of unity in the action, ill drawn characters, gigantic or puerile conceits, languid verses, captious expressions, unharmonious and unnatural poetry; and the whole piece filled with descriptions, comparisons out of their proper place, idle rants of philosophy or politics, interwoven with disagreeable amours, effeminate conversations, and vulgar displays of tenderness, which meet us in every scene. There is no appearance of tragic vigour, of the opposition of rival passions, or of the astonishing revolutions of the theatre: in vain do we seek that which

*Pectus inaniter angit,
Irritat, mulcet, falsis terroribus implet,*

Can make me feel each passion ———

Enrage, compose, with more than magic art ;

With pity and with terror tear my heart. POPE.

We find nothing which interests us, instructs, amuses,
or charms us

Delectando, pariterque monendo.

Instruction and delight can blend,

: Please with his fancy, with his moral mend.

COLMAN.

Every thing is reduced to a concatenation of bad
verses, in which

Acer spiritus ac vis,

Nec verbis, nec rebus inest.

——— it may be wrought

In style and subject, without fire and force. FRANCIS.

In this manner, my dear Count, I have described, perhaps with a little too much severity, but certainly with truth, that which has been hitherto called Tragedy among us. The greatest boast that can be made is, that it is composed, ac-

according to the rules which Aristotle has laid down, for Trissino having set the example in his *Sofonisba*, nobody has hitherto presumed to depart from it.

But why, it will be said, have we confined ourselves within these limits, which are so far removed from the perfection of the drama? why has no Italian author produced a tragedy which may be compared with the pieces of the Greek, or at least of the French stage, since in every other branch we have poets without number, or at least such as are called so? why, as if despairing of recovery, have we returned back to those musical dramas, which having become ridiculous in the last century, have since been made more tolerable by Apostolo Zeno, and afterwards perfected by Metastasio; leaving the buskin and laurel of tragedy to our neighbours, without making farther attempts to dispute it with them? I will answer these questions separately, as I flatter myself that I have discovered the true solution.

Since the *Sofonisba* of Trissino abovementioned, which was acted at Rome; and since some other tragedies (our first attempts in the art) represented at Florence and Ferrara; we have, indeed, never

wanted poets, who have continued to write new pieces, and have succeeded in producing them upon the stage. But what kind of stages were these? sometimes theatres belonging to the court, but most commonly to private noblemen, who caused them to be erected in their palaces and villas. Upon these temporary stages, select tragedies were represented a few times by the courtiers of the prince, or by private parties of ladies and gentlemen. Thus Italy having never had a permanent tragic theatre, nor actors by profession, these private representations could only be called transient attempts, from which the art received little or no advantage.

It was worse when those companies of actors, who have always reigned upon the Italian stage, got possession of those more or less imperfect tragedies, when they were made public by the press. Every body knows of what absurd and aukward buffoons those wandering troops are generally composed. Every body knows that the greater part of these barbarous actors, besides being taken from the lowest and most uneducated part of the people, is born in those provinces where our lan-

guage is spoken with the least purity, both in the grammar, and in the pronounciation. Therefore, these actors, lisping a tragedy, produce the same effect upon their hearers, as the tragedies of Racine or Voltaire would produce at Paris, if they were recited in the provincial brogue of Gascony or Picardy. We all know to what ridiculous, ill-dressed, aukward, and even ugly females, the sublime parts of the Phedra, Andromache, Semiramis, and Zara, are given, to be torn to pieces in the jargon of Bologna, Lombardy, or Genoa ; and to be recited and acted without elegance or grace, in the style of the beggar-women in the streets.

Thus the entire want of a permanent and well conducted theatre, and the more important deficiency of proper actors, hindered our poets from applying themselves to the composition of real tragedy ; and prevented the studious and judicious part of the public from frequenting the theatre, and all of us from placing importance in it, and making it an object of national glory.

Moreover, Italy being divided into so many small states, never has had a great and central point of union for Italian ambition. The Romans,

the Lombards, the Tuscans, the Piedmontese, the Venetians, and the Neapolitans, considered each other as having different interests, and as enemies, or at least rivals, both in the sciences and in the fine arts. In the art of painting, they certainly were so; the different schools opposed and attacked each other: the Roman painters endeavoured to decry the Bolognese, these the Florentines, and the Florentines the Venetians and the Neapolitans. Each made a separate sect, to the great injury of the nation in general.

The same happened in poetry. The absurd criticisms of that foolish set of writers upon the divine poem of Tasso, are a proof of this assertion. The books which were written by those coxcombs against that immortal poem, would fill a large shelf. Ranged under the banners of Signor Lionardo, (instead of Leonardo, as more elegant) Salviati, they endeavoured to demonstrate that the *Gerusalemme Liberata* was a collection of nonsense. The too irritable author, already rendered melancholy by an unhappy passion, was driven to madness by their attacks. They seduced the wretched praters, who were envious of the sublime genius of Tasso;

they had a short existence, like troublesome insects ; after which they sunk into the oblivion which they deserved.

From this pedantic generation arose the ridiculous comparisons between the Orlando Furioso ; and the Gerusalemme ; ridiculous, because they compared the Iliad with the Arabian Tales, and the Eneid with the Romances of Chivalry. Thence arose the puerile predilection for the Petrarchian style of speaking and writing ; and the senseless attempts at judging the mature language of the sixteenth century by the grammar of the fourteenth, which had hardly quitted its cradle.

The Italians being separated, as I mentioned, both by interest and by rivalry in the sciences and fine arts ; and each part, separately taken, not being sufficiently powerful to establish and keep up, during the whole course of the year, a national tragic theatre ; they continued indeed to write tragedies from time to time, but always on the model of the first : they likewise printed them, but they were not able to bring them before the public on the stage, a most essential trial of theatrical effect. And is it, indeed, possible to compose a tragedy by

guess, without actual experiment? The poet, left in uncertainty, finds himself in the same doubtful situation in which a painter or sculptor would be, who undertook to paint a picture, or to carve out a group, without knowing whether it was to be placed in a gallery or a public square, upon the front of a triumphal arch, or of a church. Thus wanting the knowledge of what can make an impression on the mind of the spectator, and either interest him or rouse him, the poet may probably compose a piece according to the rules prescribed, and in an elegant style, but it will be without force, languid, cold, tiresome, and rugged.

Neither can this indispensable practice in tragedy be acquired without frequenting the theatre and meditating on it, with a previous provision of all other kinds of knowledge necessary in the dramatic art. This experience being wanting, (which is difficult to obtain, unless, together with the knowledge of foreign languages, the theatres of other nations, which are best provided with actors, are diligently and attentively surveyed) no person can make any great progress in this most noble branch of poetry. Those geniuses who, as it were

by inspiration, start up ready formed, are very rare: and even these do not bring their art to perfection at one stroke, but only point out the way to others. Corneille, who derived assistance from Mairet, Rotrou, and other imperfect writers, formed Racine; and these two formed Voltaire and Crebillon. Thus among the Greeks, Sophocles learnt from Eschylus, and Euripides from Sophocles, with the assistance of a permanent theatre. A poet who is ignorant of the practice of theatrical effect, cannot be striking in his tragedies, except in a few scenes derived from his own warmth and enthusiasm; or in the display of the tender passion, which insinuates itself into the mind, and agitates and rouses it with greater facility.

It is incontestable therefore, in my opinion, that a fixed theatre principally forms both writers and actors, and that both writers and actors acquire perfection by change and variety. If therefore an Italian sovereign should desire to introduce into his dominions, an useful and pleasing species of drama, it would be necessary to begin by establishing a permanent stage. Then he ought to collect a number of the best actors which could be

found, selecting out of the itinerant troops those few who pronounce well, who have a handsome and genteel person, a good voice, or any other perfection natural or acquired. It would be necessary above all, to collect those females in which these talents are found together, and to deliver them from the infamy to which, I know not why, all those who appear on the stage are condemned by us, without any difference on account of their conduct and manners. A company thus selected being well paid, and a judicious collection of tragedies and comedies being formed, either out of our own stock, or translated with vigour and elegance, with a proper distribution of parts, they ought to appear on the stage every day, as soon as they are properly instructed by able teachers, in judicious declamation, action, and theatrical gesture. Young poets, by frequenting this well regulated theatre, would insensibly acquire knowledge with regard to the management of the passions, the disposition of the scenes and subjects, and whatever else could contribute to the production of excellent tragedies; they would not run after the effusions of an unregulated imagination; they would

acquire the true and natural language of the theatre; and by little and little they would arrive at that degree of perfection, which at present is hardly known in Italy. Our poets, ill provided with every thing, and particularly with that most essential mirror, a permanent theatre, in which may be seen

Quid sit pulchrum, quid turpe, quid utile, quid non.

—— the beautiful and base

Of vice and virtue more instructive rules; FRANCIS. nevertheless, to our great disgrace, attempt to write tragedy. They think that they observe the rules laid down, they do all that is necessary. Not considering that they are pigmies, who madly strive to wield the club of Hercules. They do not reflect, that

Non satis est dixisse, ego mira poemata pango.

—— 'tis *not* enough to cry,

I can write poems to strike wonder blind. COLMAN.

they do not call to mind how difficult a task it is to wrestle with Sophocles, with Euripides, and three or four others, who fill up the immense void of twenty-four centuries. They forget that all the

tragedies which have been hissed, ridiculed, and despised, for this century past, have nevertheless been written according to the rules: as if it were sufficient to observe the unities, to arrive at perfection: as if the knowledge of men, of their characters and their manners, in all ages, in all kinds of education, under all governments, in all countries, at all times of life, and in all different religions, were of little or no importance: as if the difficult art of forming a proper plan, of dividing it well, of distributing it into scenes, and of restraining it, so that the interest may increase instead of diminishing, were of no use: and lastly, as if there were no occasion for being endued with a poetical imagination, which is the principal cause of the value of every species of poetry, with an easy vein, with elegance of diction, with force and vehemence of thought, with elegance and freedom of colouring, and with what Horace summarily calls

———— Mens diviniior, atque os
Magna sonaturum.

A mind partaking of divinity, and lips from whence
sublime sounds issue.

So many different talents, that nature and art appear to force themselves, when they join to produce them.

This is the reason, my dear friend, that having no permanent tragic theatre, whilst in many cities there was a musical stage almost constantly, we have returned to this last, forming dramatic monsters, for such are our musical plays, or at least those of the greater part of theatrical poets. Apostolo Zeno, to improve the plan, abandoned the ridiculous subjects of the last age, and endeavoured to form the opera upon the model of the French tragedies. Thus we behold a prolixity, sufficiently insupportable when declaimed, and much more so when sung in recitative. We have introduced tedious narratives, complicated intricacies, actions void of simplicity, tiresome displays of science, and other frivolities, all erected after the same design. We have added of our own, the Gothic invention of similes, noisy uproars, everlasting debates on morality, war, politics, and government, which agree with the theatre just as well as a Harlequin's coat with the divine statue of the Vatican Apollo. I am well aware, that this plan has not

been adopted without a motive. With such materials for filling up, it is very easy to get forward. All the characters have always a great deal to say, for even the confidantes and captains of the guard, are represented as crossed in love. And if any scenes are still deficient in matter, we have a great store of philosophical remarks and comparisons with which we can fill up the vacancy.

But on the other hand, if we regard the rule of *simplex et unum*;* if we confine ourselves to the number of persons which the action requires, without augmentation; if these only speak according to their characters and their passions; in this case, to furnish three or five interesting acts completely, with the language of the heart, and not of the fancy, is a task which

—————Pauci, quos æquus amavit

Jupiter, atque ardens evexit ad æthera virtus,

Dīs geniti, potuere.

To few great Jupiter imparts —————

And those of shining worth and heavenly race.

DRYDEN.

* Simple and one.

In the musical drama, every thing passes off without difficulty; the poetry is the part of it which is the least regarded; nobody either reads it, or listens to it; and with justice. The audience wait for the airs, and in the mean time converse, scold, chat, and make love, with so little moderation, that in our theatres the observation of Horace, respecting those of his own age, is perfectly verified;

———— Quæ pervincere voces
 Evaluere sonum, referunt quem nostra theatra?
 Garganum mugire putes nemus.

—Where's the voice so strong, as to confound
 The shouts with which our theatres resound?
 Loud as when surges lash the Tuscan shore,
 Or mountain forests with a tempest roar. FRANCIS.

Such being our respectable custom, modern poets may flatter themselves with the expectation of obtaining a name, of no very great duration, and in other countries, attended rather with censure than with praise; they may vaunt of their performances, and give congratulation and applause to each other; and, proceeding in the same track, where little genius, and less labour, is required, they may obtain

the praises and predilections of the fair sex, in every situation of life.

According to the observation of Horace, my dear Count,

Iliacos intra muros peccatur, et extra ;

Trojans and Greeks——

Offend alike.——

FRANCIS.

So that if I turn my eyes from our wretched theatre towards the English stage, I shall not find much greater subjects for commendation in any department. That illustrious nation, which affects to think and act differently from the rest of the world, a nation of liberty and lofty spirit, has extended its desire of singularity to the theatre. It has adopted a peculiar constitution of its drama, as well as of its government ; it is contented with, and even vain of it, in spite of the clamours of other nations. According to the famous Shakspeare, the author of this new constitution, the unities are chains fit only for slaves, and probability is the invention of a dull imagination. He either knew not, or did not wish to know, the treatises and tragedies of the Greeks, as our Metastasio asserted that he had never read

the French poets, in order to avoid imitation. Shakspeare, therefore, soared without any foreign assistance. He produced monsters, but they were original monsters; he introduced characters without number. With battles, with the poison of assassins and tyrants, with death and murder, he mixed the buffoonery of pretended fools, who frequently really were such. In his plays we are often made to laugh in the next scene after a dreadful massacre. He did not endeavour to embellish nature; he shewed her such as she really was when he lived, rough, fierce, and savage. But to say the truth, the characters of his pieces were savages, and so perhaps were those who formed his audience. He made great use of spectres and ghosts, and in my opinion with great judgment. They are (whatever people say) by far the most effectual instruments of terror, and were very well adapted to the superstitious and credulous minds of his countrymen. It is likewise possible that a simple violent death had no great effect on the minds of men of that composition: Shakspeare therefore multiplied murders to a disgusting length. He endued his assassins with sanguinary rage, brutality, and scornful

cruelty. And if these horrors were not sufficient to interest his audience, he applied to hell for new powers to move their obdurate souls. He mixed prose and verse, the sublime and the ridiculous, with such success, that his buffoonery is exactly that of the lowest populace, while his sublimity is in the style of Longinus. His successors, the flowery, elegant, and poetical Dryden, the tender Rowe, (tender, as far as the character of his nation allows) the warm but incoherent Otway, the political and thoughtful Addison, cold, except in the soliloquy of Cato,

Deliberatâ morte ferocior;

Fearless by reflection grown,

—— greatly thus to end——

BOSCAWEN.

all attempted to imitate their master. They seldom succeeded, especially in his peculiar walk of the grand, the sublime, the picturesque, because he did not possess his genius: so that old Shakspeare, the English Eschylus, remained master of the stage, and still continues to domineer there, and to make the hair of the audience erect with terror, even though they are aware and acquainted with what

they hear: for when this singular poet designs to terrify, by his forcible, strong, and energetic expressions, he destroys every precaution, and overcomes all resistance. England did not advance beyond this father of her tragedy: the British Eschylus was not followed by a Sophocles or an Euripides. The Tragic Muse, at the death of Shakspeare, appears to have exclaimed,

Thus far extend, thus far thy bounds,
O English stage.

The French theatre, which I now am about to examine, is undoubtedly the best which exists. But it must be acknowledged, that its faults are by no means few. It has too much narrative and declamation, and too little business and action: the characters who appear upon it, are modelled after the French fashion, and all pretty nearly resemble each other: they think and speak *à la mode de France*, and make love like the shepherds in Fontenelle. Greek, Roman, Scythian, and Asiatic passions are seldom met with, although heroes of those nations are represented on the stage.

The sublime sentiments of those free souls, those virtuous constitutions of antiquity, are seldom seen;

every thing is of the present age. The French theatre is confined within the bounds of imaginary decorum. The style of the conversations is almost always elegant; but also generally consists of amorous disputes, arranged in syllogistic order. The heroic epistles of Ovid, and the elegies of every love-sick poet are adopted, and dressed up in their own manner. As a proof, I will take the first tragedy which occurs on opening the book, the *Andromaque*, one of the finest of the immortal Racine's. The scene which lies before me, is the fourth of the first act, between Pyrrhus and Andromache; a scene of a hundred and thirty verses in length, which entirely consists of a long formal dispute, in which it is debated, whether the widow of Hector, may or ought to marry the son of Achilles; of that Achilles who slew her husband, and dragged him behind his chariot, round the walls of Troy. The same Pyrrhus of whom Virgil says,

——— *Primoque in limine Pyrrhus*
Exultat telis, et luce coruscat ahenâ.

Before the gate stood Pyrrhus, threat'ning loud
 With glittering arms, conspicuous in the crowd.

DRYDEN.

The poet compares him to a serpent,

———— mala gramina pastus ;

Restored with poisonous herbs ;

DRYDEN.

then to a river, which having broken its banks,

Cum stabulis armenta trahit ;

Sweeps the cattle and the cots away.

DRYDEN.

And when he makes him speak, he makes him say,
in an insulting tone, to the respectable old Priam,
while he is murdering him :

———— Referes ergo hæc, et nuncius ibis
Pelidæ genitori :————

—To my father my foul deeds relate ;

DRYDEN.

and in the act of killing a defenceless old man :

Nunc morere altaria, ad ipsa trementem
Traxit.

Implicuitque comam lævâ ;

Ac lateri capulo tenuis abdidit ensem.

Now die —

Hauled from beneath the violated shade,

And on the sacred pile the royal victim laid

His right hand held his bloody falchion bare ;
 His left he twisted in his hoary hair,
 Then, with a speeding thrust, his heart he found.

DRYDEN,

(remark this frantic excess, *abdedit ensem*).——

Let us now see with what Parisian gallantry, this
 Pyrrhus, who is drawn in this manner by the first
 poet in the world, is made by Racine to address
 the weeping Andromache :

—— Me cherchiez vous, Madame ?

Un espoir si charmant me seroit il permis ?

May I, madam,

Flatter my hopes so far as to believe,

You come to seek me here ?

PHILIPS.

He goes on, and says :

Peut on haïr sans cesse, et punit-on toujours ?

Que vos beaux yeux sur moi se sont bien exercés !

Brulè de plus de feux que je n'en allumai,

Tant de foi, tant de pleurs, tant d'ardeurs inquietes,

And does one always hate, and always punish ?

Oh ! how are those bright eyes revenged on me !

More fired by love, than Troy was by my rage—

Such constancy, such ceaseless tears, such ardour.

I will desist from transcribing any more verses,

as I think these are abundantly sufficient to prove what I have asserted. Certainly these tender speeches, these amorous addresses, these little conceits, do not agree with the character of Pyrrhus.*

* In Mithridate, that king, complaining of the passion which he feels for Monimia, whom he suspects to be enamoured of his favourite son Zifares, laments in the following manner:

J'ai su, par une longue et pénible industrie,
Des plus mortels vénéins prévenir la furie:
Ah! qu'il eût mieux valu, plus sage ou plus heureux,
Et repoussant les traits d'un amour dangereux,
Ne pas laisser remplir d'ardeurs empoisonnées
Un cœur déjà glacé par le froid des années!

These verses are quoted by Voltaire with national complacency, and are given out as worthy to serve for a model. He ought, however, to have told us what those poisonous ardours are; perhaps those of the robe which Dejanira gave to Hercules, or Medea to Creusa. He ought to have justified the conceit which is so very observable in the last two verses, in which the poet trifles with a play of words, about those poisonous ardours, and a heart frozen by the cold of years. In my opinion, such a coldness is degrading. Add this to that verse of Pyrrhus, which he has quoted out of Andromaque:

More fired by love, than Troy was by my rage;

To shew that we are not unjust in fixing upon a single example, let us consider how that monster

and some other passages which I could find in Racine ; and it will appear, that the French ought to have abstained from imputing with so great contempt the defect of *concelli* to our Tasso, and from giving the name of *clinquant* to his immortal poem, in the words of Boileau, who was no painter-poet. I do not believe that two viler conceits than these, can be found in the *Gerusalemme Liberata*. If the French had had this moderation (as, to say the truth, the sublime Voltaire frequently had), they would not have deserved Horace's reproach :

Cum tua pervideas oculis male lippus inunctis,
Cur in amicorum vitiis tam cernis acutum ?

— Wherefore while you carelessly pass by
Your own worst vices with unheeding eye,
Why so sharp-sighted in another's fame,
Strong as an eagle's ken or dragon's beam ? FRANC.

These little defects do not take away my high admiration of the great Racine ; but when one quotes verses out of a poet, it ought to be done with circumspection, for fear of exposing oneself to reprehension. I will here quote some verses of Racine, which surpass every thing that is most poetical, most picturesque, and most animated in

Nero speaks in *Britannicus*; and we shall receive an additional proof, of what I have undertaken to

any tragic poet, ancient or modern. Such are those which *Clytemnestra* pronounces, at the moment when she believes her daughter to be sacrificed: Scene IV.

Act. V. of *Iphigene*:

Quoi ! pour noyer les Grecs et leurs mille vaisseaux,

Mer, tu n'ouvriras pas des abîmes nouveaux ?

Quoi ! lorsque les chassant du port qui les recele,

L'Aulide aura vomi leur flotte criminelle,

Les vents, les mêmes vent, si long temps accusés,

Ne te couvriront pas de ses vaisseaux brisés ?

Et toi, Soleil, et toi, qui dans cette contrée

Reconnois l'héritier et le vrai fils d'Atrée,

Toi qui n'osas du pere éclairer le festin,

Recule, ils t'ont appris ce funeste chemin !

Mais cependant, ô ciel ! ô mere infortunée !

De festons odieux ma fille couronnée

Tend la gorge aux couteaux par son pere apprêtés !

Calchas va dans son sang Barbares, arrêtez !

C'est le pur sang du Dieu qui lance le tonnerre

J'entends gronder la foudre, et sens trembler la terre ;

Un Dieu vengeur, un Dieu fait retentir ses coups.

O divine enthusiasm ! O model of eloquence, inimitable in any age or nation ! I am impartial, but the French writers ought to render equal justice to us.

demonstrate. Thanks to Tacitus and Suetonius, Nero is as well known in our days, as he was in Rome, during his abominable reign. In Britannicus we find him chatting, through an hundred and sixty verses, with that imaginary Junia, who is introduced to please the ladies of the court. The obstinate Mithridates

Adversis rerum immersabilis undis,

In perils plunged, the patient hero——

FRANCIS.

converses in the same style of gallantry with the unhappy Monimia. The Turk Bajazet talks in the same tender language to Attalide : and so does the half tamed Hippolytus, the enemy of love, to the fabulous Aricia, and the amorous Titus to his faithful Berenice. No person who has read these tragedies will accuse me of malignity in asserting, that all the heroes of the French stage are formed upon the same model.

Those of Corneille, indeed, are less tender and less whining : his genius was of a loftier kind. He was too full of lofty conceptions to descend to those amorous follies : and when he does so, he represents

Polyphemus toying with Galatea. But it must be observed, that all his characters resemble each other in their gigantic rudeness. Corneille almost always goes beyond nature; his figures are always massy and excessive. He often makes use of the sententious vigour of Lucan, and the rhetorical language of Seneca, and frequently, in his endeavour to imitate them

———— Nubes et inania captat.

———— will despise

The words of earth, and soar into the skies. FRANC.

And when he strives to adorn his heroes with the passion of love, as he describes it without feeling it, he soon discovers his deficiency.

Crebillon, his admirer and disciple, is always gloomy, and indeed too much so; and his style is defective and inelegant. Voltaire neglects his subjects, by which means he frequently runs into improbability. Of this assertion his Semiramis is a sufficient proof: upon the too improbable plot of which, a judicious and unanswerable critique was lately published in London. Neither has he com-

pletely avoided the defect of declamation, nor that of dressing his characters in the French style. I will not enlarge upon the evidence of this, least I should be tedious. But in spite of whatever weak and defective passages may be discerned by the eye of criticism in the tragedies of these four sublime poets; they are nevertheless the best in the world. They equalled the ancient Greeks in many things, in some they surpassed them. If they had imitated nature more closely, if they had yielded less to the frivolous taste of the times in which they lived, (when the true and majestic ideas of antiquity were scorned and abhorred) they would have fixed the *ne plus ultra* of tragedy for future poets. But perfection is above the reach of man: that which has fewest faults in every science and fine art, is the best.

————— Optimus ille est,
Qui minimis urgetur.

————— the best
Is he, who with the fewest is oppress'd. FRANCIS.
Such are these illustrious tragic poets of France.
When I reflect upon the celebrated observation
of Horace,

Ut pictura poesis.

Poems and pictures are adjudged alike ; COLMAN.

I am induced to believe that it is more significant and mysterious than is commonly imagined. It appears to me, like an oracle, to contain hidden meanings, the interpretation of which requires much attentive meditation. Suffer me, my dear Count, to display to you my ideas upon these few words ; I am authorized to propose my sentiments, such as they are, by my long experience in theatrical matters.

I think then, that a tragedy ought to consist of a series of paintings, which the subject will supply to the imagination and fancy of one of those excellent painters who deserve to be distinguished by the appellation, not very frequently obtained, of painter-poets. This opinion of mine will be better explained by an example.

Let us suppose, therefore, that any one of these painter-poets who excelled in composition, as Rubens, Julio Romano, Tintoretto, or any of their rivals, were commanded by some sovereign prince to paint the sacrifice of Iphigenia in a large hall : it

is clear that this story or fable must be divided into several pictures, which should display it from the first beginning until the catastrophe or conclusion.

Having formed his plan in his mind, the painter should select the most splendid and interesting situations which present themselves to his judgment. He should assign a separate picture to each of these : in which I allude to the acts of a tragedy. Those situations would certainly be preferred by the painter, which are most proper to lay open the characters of the persons introduced, with the passions by which they were agitated, and which furnish the most business to his pencil, because those situations likewise occasion greater delight, curiosity, surprise, and interest, in the minds of the spectators.

The first picture should represent the Grecian fleet lying at anchor in the harbour of Aulis, with the flags and ensigns unagitated by the wind; and the soldiers and sailors upon the shore, idle and unemployed. In the foreground, on one side, he should paint the royal tent of Agamemnon, in which some of the leaders should be consulting Calchas, upon the most proper means to appease

the gods, and to obtain a wind to waft them to the Trojan shore. Calchas ought to be the principal figure in this picture, who declares the wrath of the gods with astonishment, and pointing to a distant temple upon a lofty promontory, exhorts them to have recourse to the oracle of Apollo; to which proposition Agamemnon and the Grecian heroes appear to consent.

The second picture (which may likewise form a part of the first act) should be the solemn arrival at the camp, of Clytemnestra the wife, and Iphigenia the daughter, of Agamemnon, who is betrothed to Achilles. The princesses, descending from a superb chariot, are received by Agamemnon, the Grecian leaders, and Achilles. Their attendants, and those of the heroes (whom I consider as the chorus of a tragedy) express the general approbation of, and satisfaction at, the approaching nuptials. Achilles, Iphigenia, Clytemnestra, and Agamemnon, appear excessive in their joy.

In the third picture, an altar should appear at a distance, towards which the happy pair are advancing, for the celebration of the nuptial ceremony, together with Agamemnon, Clytemnestra, and the

principal commanders of the Grecian host. Spectators, male and female, crowned with flowers, sing the epithalamium, to the sound of numerous instruments. This assemblage should occupy one side of the picture; on the other Calchas, accompanied by priests and sacrificers, presents himself, with a menacing aspect. The attendants of the bride and bridegroom should stop short before him: Agamemnon and Clytemnestra should appear disturbed, and she, ready to faint, should be supported by two of her attendants; Iphigenia, dismayed, should lean on Achilles; that hero, in threatening guise, should appear inflamed with anger and rage; the leaders who accompany them should appear astonished; whilst Calchas, beckoning, should pronounce the oracle, and brandish the sacred steel at Iphigenia, to shew that she is the victim which the gods demand.

In the following picture should be painted Achilles, mad with rage, in the attitude of unsheathing his sword against Calchas and Agamemnon. At the feet of Achilles should appear Clytemnestra, prostrated amidst a company of weeping maidens; Iphigenia should be painted in tears.

Around them should be depicted the Grecian heroes, plunged in thought, and hesitating between compassion for the princess, and religious terror. Ulysses should hold back the arm of the menacing Achilles. The populace, with a different passion represented in every face, should fill up the remainder of the piece.

In another picture, amidst priests led by the fierce Calchas, accompanied by fanatic soldiers, Iphigenia should appear in the act of being torn by force from the arms of the vainly raging and supplicating Clytemnestra. Calchas, in a fit of religious zeal, should be represented in the act of encouraging his satellites to perform their cruel task, shewing them that is the will of the gods. The open space of the picture should be filled with scattered assemblages of the princess's maidens, some struck dumb with terror, others weeping, and others attempting to defend Iphigenia.

In the last picture, whilst at the altar, prostrate before the statue of Diana, the wretched Iphigenia appears, crowned with flowers, pale, and hardly alive: whilst Clytemnestra, who is held at a distance by the guards, should be drawn in the atti-

tude of rushing towards her daughter, whilst the cruel Calchas already appears to stretch out the sacred knife: the furious Achilles should be painted sword in hand, catching hold of the priest's right arm, and at the point of slaying him. His myrmidons, on one side, should appear already levelling their lances, whilst the Grecian bands, on the other, appear prepared to oppose them. Agamemnon should be painted amidst the Grecian leaders, with his face covered; but Diana, in a cloud, with a hind at her feet, should seem to descend towards the altar, satisfied with their obedience. At a distance, the ensigns of the ships should be waving in the air, whilst some of the sails should swell with the breeze, the sailors being employed in mending those which are torn: evident signs of the gods being appeased, the life of Iphigenia secured, Achilles contented, Agamemnon and Clytemnestra consoled, and the action brought to a happy conclusion.*

* I have imagined six pictures: in painting, the situations may be multiplied at pleasure. The painter is not confined to the unity of time, he may wander from it whenever he pleases. He is at liberty to call his work a tragedy, if he will compress, into five pictures, the

It is discoverable at first sight, all the action which this celebrated fable affords to the imagination, may be compressed into these six pictures. The painter, who is a poet without words, being unable to make his characters speak, is necessitated to make them act. Here nothing draws us aside, or misleads us: every thing serves to represent to us the passions of those heroes, on that eminent occasion. It appears to me, that if a series of such pictures, forming a painted tragedy, were well designed and coloured with fire and spirit, by a first rate master, they would leave in the mind of the spectators both terror and compassion, with greater sentiment, energy, and quickness, than a tragedy composed on the same subject, and either read, or represented on the stage.

If you will follow my idea, my dear Count, and will examine the best drawn tragedies which are known, you will find, I think, that they agree perfectly well with it, and so much the better, as they are better designed and disposed. So that I can story or fable, which he attempts to paint. He may call it a history, if he thinks proper to extend it beyond that number.

ceive the imperfections of many of them to arise from their not having been formed in this mechanical manner. The less declamatory the fuller of business, and the more picturesque are tragedies so much are they more interesting and more perfect : they likewise furnish the fancy with richer and more interesting subjects for painting : which is the case, above all other epic poems, with the divine *Gerusalemme* of Tasso, whence have been drawn a million of paintings, sketches, and designs.

All this being true, as appears to me incontestable, we have the true key to judge of the merit of every species of poetry, and particularly of tragedy, and to form both the most perfect plot, and the most interesting disposition of the scenes.

The pantomimes, I mean those of the ancients, with postures, attitudes, and gesticulations, animated the figures or personages of those whom they endeavoured to imitate : they characterized them, and led them from scene to scene by degrees, placing themselves in those forms, and situations, which they supposed would make the greatest impression on the spectators. Thus they conducted any action, either tragic or comic, from beginning to end,

without speaking a word. Pylades and Bathyllus, I believe, thus denominated their representations. The effect of those pantomimes, which the ancients called *Saltationes*, was wonderful, as Lucian and Apuleius write, together with all the ancients, who have given any account of this kind of spectacle.

To avoid prolixity, I will not enter on the discussion of this obscure subject, the dilucidation of which would require a complete dissertation. I will content myself with citing the verses of Juvenal, which relate to the effect produced by these wordless spectacles, upon the spectators :

*Cheironomon Ledam molli saltante Bathyllo,
Tuccia vesicæ non imperat.*

One sees a dancing-master capering high,
And raves, &c. DRYDEN.

And those of Manilius, who pronounces the following panegyric upon one of those eminent pantomimes.

Omnis fortunæ vultum per membra reducet :

————— *cogetque videre*

*Præsentem Trojam, Priamumque ante ora cadentem ;
Quodque aget, id credes, stupefactus imagine veri.*

In one short view they shall present to sight
Whole crowds——

Before the pleas'd spectators Troy shall lie

In ruins, and the wretched Priam die. CREECH.

Referring the curious to the authors abovementioned, for more ample intelligence, I desire them to reflect upon the rage of the public for these theatrical representations, and upon the parties, which became so noisy and vehement for Pylades and Bathyllus, or for Ilas and Pylades, that Augustus and other succeeding emperors found themselves obliged to repress them. That then, which chiefly moves, agitates, terrifies, and rouses the spectator, in a tragedy, is not the words. This is observed by Horace, who says,

Segnius irritant animos demissa per aurem,
Quam quæ sunt oculis subjecta fidelibus.

Cold is the tale, distilling through the ear,
Filling the soul with less dismay and fear,
Than where spectators view, like standers-by,
The deed submitted to the public eye. COLMAN.

The interest is hurt by too much wandering in the discourses, by declamations, and by dissertations. It is likewise evident, that the poet, by causing his

characters to prate, only removes farther from the primary object of the tragedy.

This being true, as I flatter myself that I have proved, the evident result is ; that every subject for a tragedy is defective in which there is too much speaking and too little action ; that in order to reach the perfection of the art, it is necessary to cut off *ambitiosa ornamenta* ; and that by forming the plot itself, like a series of pictures, as I have proposed, (pictures, which will restrain the conversation to that small quantity which is indispensibly necessary to characterize the persons, and to conduct them into those picturesque situations which strike and affect the minds of the spectators), an author will be able to make the best distribution of every theatrical subject, and the most lively, interesting, animated, and moving tragedy which can be written. It is not, however, in the power of every one to dispose the plan of a tragedy in this manner ; the disposition of the scenes, which arises from these separate paintings, is very difficult to perform : and that disposition is the part, which at present is the least studied. Careless of probability, our writers abandon themselves to chance. And yet,

upon this disposition, they absolutely depend for a copious supply of materials, towards the composition of the scenes, and for the final success of the tragedy itself.

In writing your plays, my dear friend, you have had in mind something similar to what I have here laid down. I observe that you have constantly endeavoured to make yourself a painter-poet, to put, as it were, every thing into action. If, sometimes, you have suffered yourself to be led away from your usual practice, and have abandoned to narrative the most vigorous and energetic parts of the action; you have, however, been careful not to wander long; like Racine, who *dormitat* * in the account of the death of Hippolytus, which he causes Theramenes to deliver to Theseus: an account now struck out of that beautiful tragedy, which formerly terminated in exciting disgust, instead of moving compassion. I will now deliver my opinion upon every play in your first volume, with which you have favoured me.

The action of Filippo is single, well distributed, and naturally conducted. The argument is not abstruse: the spectators understand the subject in

* Sleeps.

the first scene. The characters are truly drawn: that of Gomez, a courtier, and of that horrible court, is excellent. Philip is painted to the life; the Spanish Tiberius is recognized by every body; from him we hear *suspensa semper, et obscura verba* :* in him we see the man *sine miseratione, sine ira* : † we always find him *obstinatum clausumque, ne quo affectu perrumperetur*, ‡ masterly strokes of the character of Tiberius, vigorously expressed by Tacitus. Leonardo is a hypocrite worthy of such a master; Perez is a rare example of virtue, among a set of villains, by way of chiaro-oscuro contrast. Isabella is imprudent, ingenuous, and affectionate; and Carlos is such as he is described in the secret history of that reign of wickedness, craft, poison, and blood; he is inconsiderate, impetuous, because he is exasperated; but very unlike his cruel father, and therefore not treated like a son.

The suspicions of the royal tyrant are prominent on the stage; they are put in motion and managed

* Expressions always dark and doubtful.

† Without pity, without anger.

‡ Close and reserved, with a perfect command of himself.

in a masterly manner; they are the knot which perplexes and unravels the action, as in the *Mithridate* of Racine.

But in this latter, the king degrades himself, by too vulgar an artifice, in order to penetrate into the breast of the too affectionate and incautious Monimia; he proposes to her to espouse his son Zifares, with whom she is in love; a passion which Mithridates suspects: he makes this proposal to her, almost immediately after he has been exaggerating his own passion for her, and has declared the near approach of his own marriage with her. Monimia has therefore many motives to distrust the king's complaisant proposal; for which reason I think it an error of judgment, to make her fall so immediately into the net which he spreads for her; a net which she ought certainly to have seen: neither is there an insensible gradation from his passion already known, and just before newly expressed to Monimia, to his condescension in offering to give her up to another, by which an excuse might be formed for so great a piece of simplicity. This simplicity, considering the character of Monimia, is not founded on nature, but merely adopt-

ed by the poet for his own convenience.* Philip's artifice is much better imagined: he does not propose to Isabella to yield her up to his son Carlos, but only consults her on his conduct; whence suspicion and diffidence do by no means so naturally arise in her mind: nor in the attempt which Philip makes on her heart, in spite of her beloved Carlos, does she open herself with so much honesty, as Monimia in Racine, to the jealous Mithridates. Some of her involuntary motions may serve indeed to increase his jealous suspicions, but they are not strong enough to amount to a competent proof of the love, which she bears the prince. This discovery is reserved for the deceitful, cunning, and crooked Gomez, in the terrible moment when he assures her, that sentence of death is pronounced upon her lover; which he laments with

* Observe that Mithridates, speaking of his love to Monimia, adduces his declining years and his misfortunes, in proof of the greatness of his passion; afterwards he changes his style, and gives them for proper motives, which force him to resign her to his son. This alone would have been sufficient to inspire the fair one with distrust.

such hypocrisy and malice. This artifice is both natural and probable.

I could have wished, however, that the accusation which the king brings against his son, of having designed to murder him, had been better explained: we do not find clearly, whether it is founded on truth, or whether it is a mere pretext of the king's to render his son odious and detestable. If it is a mere invention, it does not seem to me sufficient, that Perez should demonstrate its falsity. Carlos ought to have denied and rejected it with horror, when he was charged with it by Philip, instead of recurring to extraneous evidence. The declaration of his innocence would have served to render more odious the character of his cruel and perfidious father.

From Polinice, I observe that you are very skilful in composing tragedies without love; a difficult enterprize, especially for our modern poets, whose little collection of babyish conceits would be quickly exhausted, if they were debarred from using this copious subject. The story of Polinice is one of the most tragical of all antiquity, and nobody has managed it better than yourself. The

characters are truly drawn; that of Polinice is considerably better than that of Eteocles; which is very proper, as Eteocles, by breaking a solemn compact, occasioned the hatred and war between the brothers. Jocasta and Antigone have exactly the characters which history has given to them. Creon entangles the action by his ambitious and deceitful character; he stirs up his nephews to strife and hatred; he plots and betrays; he endeavours to get rid of the two princes, and to obtain their throne. The scene of the oath is very beautiful; that between the mother and her sons is not less so. The plot is simple, and runs rapidly towards the catastrophe; that is terrible, and strikes the eyes of the spectators.

Some, perhaps, will think the object which Creon has in view in inflaming the resentment of his two furious nephews, not sufficiently decisive. Can he with any probability expect to obtain the disputed sceptre, by the death of both of them at the same time? The expectations of reigning which he can form, seem too weak to induce him to display such a detestable character, and to meditate so many crimes. But, however, as he is so wicked, we may

attribute to him the design of making away with the survivor of the brethren privately, and of openly contesting the succession to the crown with the son of Polinice, who certainly would be the lawful heir in every case. Antigone gives us to understand that Creon's views are directed towards the throne, but I could have wished that he himself had given us the same information in a few words.

I likewise think, that the motive assigned to Eteocles, for suffering his brother to escape out of his hands, and to return in safety to his own camp, whilst, as he observes, he might easily have had him murdered, being in his power, and in his own palace; I think, I say, that this motive is not sufficiently just to serve as a foundation for the catastrophe of the play. His motive is, that his hatred of his brother cannot be satiated by his death, unless he himself accomplish it. You will say that he is blinded by his passion. But can that blind him to such a degree as to make him hazard his own life? Can he be certain of killing his brother, who is quite as resolute and stout as himself? Is he prudent in abandoning to chance both his own revenge, and the sceptre which he may secure to

himself by causing Polinice to be murdered? Can any obstacles to this assassination, which he can naturally foresee, (obstacles depending on the tenderness of the mother, and the affectionate vigilance of the sister), in any manner excuse such an improbable resolution? It would be more justifiable, if Eteocles could point out to us these probable obstacles, arising from the sharp-sightedness of Jocasta and Antigone.

I do not know any subject on the tragic stage, more single, more simple, or more simply disposed, than that of Antigone, which you have been able to confine to four persons. The love of Antigone and Hemon is truly tragic. The stage does not possess female tenderness more affecting than that of Argia, nor cruelty more shocking than that of Creon, who tramples even upon paternal affection. So many opposite passions allow room for wonderful events, and sentiments of heroism; as in the second scene of the third act, between Antigone, Hemon, and Creon, and in the following scene between the two last. In act the fifth, scene the fourth, where Creon (whose hatred of the princess is truly frantic) orders that she shall not be carried to be buried

alive, as he had commanded, but that she shall be carried back to prison; this alteration in a fierce, determined, and relentless heart, like his, appears too sudden, and built upon too slight considerations. But the departure of Antigone, towards the place of her punishment, occasions the meeting between her and Argia, and their tender separation. And I think that the cause of Creon's new resolution is sufficiently done away, by the apology which he himself makes for it, in the fifth scene of the fifth act.

In the same manner it may be said, that in the third and fourth scenes of the fourth act, too much confidence is placed in Hemon by his inhuman father. I do not say that he ought to have any apprehensions of him, on his own account; his son's virtuous disposition may fully quiet him on that score: but having formed a cruel and unrelenting resolution of putting Antigone to death, against his son's will, through motives of hatred and revenge, and reasons of state, it appears improbable that he should suppose that Hemon will not endeavour with all his might, to deliver her from the jaws of death; and the more so, as he takes no precaution

against an attempt which is easy to foresee. Créon cannot safely found his own extravagant confidence upon the magnanimity of Hémon, nor will his son be less virtuous, in some respects, if with that force of which he is allowed to make use, he save his mistress from death, and prevent his father from committing a new and odious crime.

I now come to the last tragedy. Although, as I have observed, the three first appear to me to be very beautiful, I am inclined to give the preference to the last. It is full of the true education, and true Roman spirit of that age. You have not fallen, my dear Count, into that common mistake of other poets, the making characters of one period think and talk like those of another. Corneille appears to me, to have run into this error in his Horaces, as he attributes to the Romans, then subjected to a king, the patriotism and public energy of the age of the Gracchi.

In your Virginia, I feel myself transported to the times of the Decemvirs. Your Romans, of both sexes, are they who could not bear even the shadow of slavery; they are

Devota morti pectora libera.

Heroes, that death in freedom's cause defied.

BOSCAWEN.

and they think and reason upon this principle. The portraits which you have designed and coloured, are grand and natural. Icilius, a tribune, who predominates in the popular assemblies, displays from the first, the licence of his office, allowed by law and by custom, and bearing a higher value on account of his love of Virginia, and his hatred of the patricians. Virginius, educated in the camp, not in the forum, and accustomed to military discipline, is more moderate towards those, who by existing laws are possessed of command; but when liberty is at stake, is as bold and as resolute as Icilius. Virginia and Icilius love each other, but in the Roman manner; their softest effusions partake of the characteristic qualities of their country. We do not see in them the effeminate expressions, not Roman but romantic, of the Marcias, Servilias, Vitellias, and Sabinas with whom we meet in the musical dramas. Appius is what he ought to have been, in order to become the object of hatred to the Romans, and the just cause of the magnanimous resolution which they took to abolish the

Decemvirate. He is drawn in a manner which excites abhorrence : he is ambitious, partial, and malignant : he abuses the laws and his authority : he is haughty as being a patrician, and still more as being of the Claudian family, the characteristic of which was pride. But on the other hand he is intriguing, cunning, eloquent, and able to seduce the multitude, and to direct it towards his own indirect and crooked ends.

From the unbridled lust, and excessive wickedness of Appius, from the virtuous passion of Virginia, from the free and headstrong love of Icilius, from the paternal affection of Virginius, arises the opposition of the passions, which reign in perpetual heat and agitation throughout the whole piece.

The addresses which these characters make to the people, according to the sensations which each experiences, and the principles and maxims which they deliver to their hearers, are all grand and admirable. We are transported by them into the forum, to the very tribunal of the infamous decemvir : we are interested by the trial ; we are terrified at the design of the venal accuser, and the snares of

the unjust judge. We wish to see Virginius triumph, and the instruments of his terrible and afflicting situation undergo the punishment which they deserve.

The third of the third act is a sublime scene of love; but of Roman love, between the father, mother, daughter, and lover; their expressions penetrate to the quick. In the fourth scene of the fourth act, in which Appius endeavours to seduce Virginia, her momentary weakness is introduced with great judgment, least her character should exceed nature. Virginia is a Roman, but tender and affectionate: she appears to yield for an instant, but education and the virtue of her country suddenly regain their predominance. The catastrophe is grand, and what I value above every other beauty, is present: the reader is agitated by terror and compassion; how much more so must the spectator be? I do not know a catastrophe more theatrical than this. The forum, the tribunal, the decemvir, the lictors, the soldiers, the people, so many characters operating at the conclusion, must in my opinion, produce a much greater effect than that which is much and so justly admired in the Rodo-

gune of Corneille. I am certain that this assertion will be verified by experience.

Having thus dispatched the plans of your tragedies, my dear friend, I shall now mention what particular passages and touches in them have chiefly struck me. To begin with the first, all the crafty discourses of Philip in the second and fourth scenes of the second act, in which his gloomy jealousy appears through the cloak of dissimulation, with which he endeavours to hide it, produced a great effect upon me. It is wonderful with what dexterity and ambiguity of expression, he mingles reproaches with expressions of love, with the black design of calling forth into the faces of the sad lovers, the hues of their hidden passion.

In Polinice, almost all the scenes are sprinkled with such elevated, though natural sentiments, that I should condemn the profusion of them if it were a defect. They have produced such an effect upon me, that in reading them I always feel that quivering sensation which a poet only knows.

It is commonly imagined, that to know whether a poem be really sublime, it is necessary to translate it into another language: if when deprived of the

ornaments which it derives from its own native dress it sustains itself by the single support of majestic, true, and appropriate expressions ; if we still find in the translation

Disjecti membra poetæ,

—— the scatter'd poet's limbs ;

FRANCIS.

it may safely be pronounced truly sublime. In proof of this assertion, I annex some passages of Polinice, translated into French, as well as I am able to do it. Judge whether they be equally sublime, equally beautiful in one as in the other language. Here is the answer of Jocasta to Polinice, act the second, scene the fourth. The son, to justify the war which he is waging against his brother, declares that he is unwilling to fall into the general disesteem of Greece ; the mother answers :

“ O la belle vertu ! la Grece doit donc t’estimer parceque tu n’est pas plus méchant que ton frere ! L’objet le plus cher à ton cœur est donc le trône. Tu ne songes donc pas quel malheur c’est d’être roi. Regard tes aïeux : quel d’entre eux régna dans Thebes sans crimes ? Le trône où

" Œdipe fut assis est en effet bien illustre! Crains-
 " tu que la terre ignore qu'Œdipe eut des enfans?
 " Es-tu vertueux? laisse le couronne aux parjures.
 " Veux-tu te venger de ton frere? veux-tu qu'il
 " devienne l'horreur de Thebes, de la Grece, du
 " monde entier? laisse-le régner. Moi-même, le
 " front orné du diademe, malgré son vain éclat,
 " n'ai-je pas vu couler mes tristes jours dans les
 " larmes? n'ai-je pas porté envie à l'état le plus
 " vil? O trône! tu n'es qu'une ancienne injustice,
 " qu'on a toujours tolérée et toujours détestée.*

* This invective against the character and dignity
 of royalty, is here placed with infinite propriety and
 judgment in the mouth of Jocasta, in order to disgust her
 son with it, and to terminate the quarrel between the
 brothers, and is one of the most sublime passages in the
 tragedy. Why then is it blamed with so little judgment
 and reflection, and so much ignorant malice?

——— Demetri, teque, Tigelli,
 Discipularum inter jubeo plorare cathedras.

Begone, Demetrius, to thy lovesome train
 Of minstrel scholars, and, in sighing strain,
 With soft Hermogenes these rhymes deplore. FRAN.

“ Funeste honneur ! plutôt aux dieux que le sort m'en
“ eût toujours éloignée ! je ne serois pas la mere et
“ la femme d'Œdipe : perfides ! je ne serois pas
“ votre mere.”

I will add the speech with which Jocasta ends the tragedy.

“ Que vois-je ? un abyme immense s'ouvre sous
“ mes pas ; les royaumes effrayants de la mort se
“ présentent à mes yeux ! . . . Ombre pâle de
“ Laïus, tu me tends les bras ! . . . à ta criminelle
“ épouse ! Quel horrible spectacle ! . . je te vois per-
“ cé de coups ! tes mains, ton visage, sont ensan-
“ glantés ! Tu pleures, malheureux ! tu cries ven-
“ geance ! Quel fut l'impie qui déchira ton sein ?
“ quel fut-il ? . . . ce fut Œdipe, cet
“ Œdipe ton fils que je reçus dans ton lit
“ fumant encore de ton sang.—Mais quelle voix
“ prononce mon nom ? . . . J'entends un bruit af-
“ freux qui remplit d'horreur les enfers . . . un
“ cliquetis d'armes et d'épées O fils de mon
“ fils ! ô mes fils ! ombres féroces !
“ . . . ô freres ! . . . vos fureurs durent donc encore
“ après le trépas ! . . . Accours, Laïus ; c'est à toi
“ de les séparer . . . Mais j'apperçois à leur côté

"ces infâmes Euménides. Vengeresse Alecton,
"c'est moi qui suis leur mere ; tourne vers moi ton
"pâle flambeau ; lance sur moi tes viperes. Voici,
"voici le flanc incestueux qui enfanta ces monstres.
"Furie ! que tardes-tu ? . . qu'est-ce qui t'arrête ?
"Je vole vers toi Je meurs."

In *Antigone*, the scene of the recognition between her and Argia, the widow of Polinice, is very interesting ; all the sentiments in it are both sublime and tender. The second scene of the third act is equally beautiful, in which I admired the energetic answers of Antigone to Creon, who offers to spare her life, upon condition of her espousing Hemon. The following scene between Hemon and Antigone, who love each other, but with a flame adapted to their different passions, is equally touching. That command of the princess to her lover, who wishes to avenge himself on his father by killing himself :

Vivi Emon, te'l commando. E' in noi delitto
L'amarci tal, ch'io col morir lo ammendo,
Col viver tu.

and that laconic dialogue between Creon and Antigone:

Creonte. Scegliesti?

Ant. Ho scelto.

Creonte. Emon?

Ant. Morte.

Creonte. L'avrai.

is worthy of Sophocles. The dignity is admirable in which Antigone clothes her just and deserved hatred of Creon, when in the second scene of the same act, she sharply reprimands Hemon for forgetting the duty of a son towards his father. The parting of the two princesses in the third act, brings tears into my eyes. In the Virginia, I am pleased and interested with every thing: the open eloquence of Icilius, the crafty speeches of Appius, and the tender conversation between the father and the daughter. The third scene of the third act, between the mother, the father, the daughter, and the lover, deserves to be much meditated upon. Among the surprising strokes of which it is full, I observed a masterly touch of the pencil, which alludes to the catastrophe, and was struck at it: it is the following:

Virginio. Oh donna! Oh di quai prodi
Perisce il seme, col perir di queste
Libere, altere, generose piante!

Icilio. Ben altrimenti piangere dovremo,
Se fosser nati i figli. A duro passo
Tratti saremo or noi——Svenarli, o schiavi
Lasciarli—Ah! schiavo il sangue mio? Non mai—
Padre io non son ;—se il fossi—

Virginio. —— Orribil lampo
Mi fan tuoi detti traveder---Deh! taci,
Taci per or.

This scene appears to me to be a model for tragic poetry, and the most beautiful which is contained in the four tragedies.

I foresee, my dear friend, that having read these observations of mine thus far, you will consider me as too partial to you. By no means: truth has dictated these praises to me: truth likewise forces me to mention, what I could still wish to find in your tragedies abovementioned.

I have already made some reflections, in the proper place, touching the conduct of the plot. I said freely, in a friendly manner, what came into my mind; I hinted at a defect, perhaps erroneously;

I defended it, perhaps unnecessarily. At present what I have to say, may deserve a more serious attention. In the first place, in Virginia I am not contented; when I read it over with the catastrophe, Virginia is slain by her own father; the people revolts: but the wicked Appius, after so many odious and execrable misdeeds, after having, by his tyrannical lust, raised up in a father, who had deserved so well of Rome, a desperation so necessary and merciful; after having been displayed to us throughout the whole piece, as worthy of the abhorrence of every one, and having excited that sensation in our minds, he not only does not undergo, by his death and punishment due to his crimes, in conformity to history, but he even triumphs, and menaces the unhappy Virginus, and the tumultuous people: and nothing can be deduced from his last impudent harangues, except that he remains at least unpunished. This unexpected catastrophe, which is contrary to the laws of tragedy, and more so to the desire which you have insinuated into the minds of the spectators, in so masterly a manner, by penciling with vigour the odious character of the Decemvirs, must necessarily send them

back dissatisfied and disappointed, at seeing this abhorred personage triumph, and virtue afflicted and oppressed. In my opinion, to end the play well, you ought to make him die on the stage; you may bring this about in a very small number of verses.

Perhaps also the close of Antigone may not be satisfactory to every reader. I know very well that the vile character of Creon is such, that the death of an only son would not drive him to despair. But the few verses by which he ends the play, would lead us to think that the death of his son is a matter of indifference to him, although he has shewn himself to be sufficiently affectionate towards him, during the course of the tragedy, and he has tried every method to satisfy his passion: neither his reproaches nor his menaces, have been able to induce him to take the least prudential precaution. Paternal love then is predominant in the mind of Creon; but when Hemon kills himself under his eyes, he views with coldness and indifference the chastisement of Heaven.

In the play of Philip, I could have wished that that tyrant, at the end of the last scene, would have

sent Gomez away, and would have remained alone to feed with horrid delight, worthy of his character, upon the miserable spectacle of his son and wife lying dead : and that in a few ferocious expressions of contempt for them, he would have satiated his monstrous vengeance with delight and complacency ; declaring their innocence, and that he had made this sacrifice to his cruel jealousy alone. In this manner, I think, the last touches ought to have been given to his horrible character ; he would have excited a general and expressive abhorrence in the representation, as he deserves. It will be said that I suffer myself to be led away by the example of Shakspeare, and that what I would have inserted in Philip, would occasion a sensation of horror in the audience against the poet. But in performing this, I should conceive myself to have reached the end, which every tragic writer ought to propose to himself.

Every poet, as every painter, has his own peculiar style. Sophocles, Euripides, Corneille, and Racine have each his own. Each of these two modern poets has formed a separate school : that of the first tends towards the grand, the sublime, the

majestic, the turgid: the second inclines towards the beautiful, the elegant, the accurate, the exact. Both have had their followers, and their partizans: Crebillon distinguished himself in the school of Corneille: in that of Racine I have not observed any tragic poet of great reputation. Voltaire formed an appropriate style for himself; he endeavoured to imitate both the one and the other: he likewise abandoned himself to his own genius, and rendered himself original. Shakspeare has an extravagant, rough, and savage manner, but he draws the character and passions of his personages after nature. We have no tragic poets: you could not imitate therefore any of our writers. Neither do I see that you have constantly imitated either the Greeks or the French: to describe you, I will make use of the expression of Tiberius, respecting Curtius Rufus—

Curtius Rufus videtur mihi ex se natus.

Curtius Rufus appears born from himself.

You are born from yourself, and have created a manner entirely your own, and I foresee that your style will become our first school. If, however, after an attentive consideration, I wish to

find some one with whom I may compare you, it appears to me that, in some places, in energy, brevity, and vigour, you resemble Shakspeare more than any other. As a proof of this, permit me to transcribe some passages of this poet, which I formerly translated into verse and prose, without any object, merely for my amusement. I flatter myself that from these you will be convinced, that my opinion is not far from the truth.

Richard the Third, in the fifth scene of the fifth act of the tragedy which bears his name, awaking suddenly from sleep, in which he had dreamed that ruin and death were denounced against him, by all those whom he had formerly murdered, speaks in the following words.

Presto un altro destrier . . . Le mie ferite
 Presto fasciate . . . O Dio, pietà! . . . Ma . . . piano . . .
 Fu sogno . . . Oh come mi contristi in sogno,
 O coscienza codarda! . . . Un fosco lume
 Tremola nelle faci; . . . a mezzo il corso
 Non è la notte . . . Gelido sudore
 Mi scorre sopra le aggricciate carni . . .
 Perchè? . . . Temo di me? . . . Io son quì solo . . .
 Riccardo ama Riccardo . . . Ed io . . . son io . . .
 V'è quì un sicario? . . . No . . . Sì . . . io vi sono . . .

Dunque fuggiam . . . Che . . . da me stesso? . . . Sì,
Da me stesso. Perchè? . . . Perchè vendetta
Non faccia . . . Come! . . . in me di me? Io m'amo . . .
M'amo? per qual ragion? per qualche bene
Ch'io mi sia fatto? Ah! no: m'odio più tosto
Per mille abbominevoli, odiosi
Delitti che ho commesso . . . Un scellerato
Io son . . . Mento . . . Nol sono. O stolto, meglio
Parla di te; . . non adularti, o stolto . . .
La mia coscienza ha mille lingue; ognuna
Fa il suo racconto, e ciaschedun racconto
Condanna me di scellerato ed empio . . .
Spergiuro, . . e quanto esser si può spergiuro;
Ed assassino, il più atroce di quanti,
Sian stati mai. Tanti delitti miei,
E orrendi tutti, al tribunal son tutti,
Gridando: E reo, è reo . . . Son disperato . . .
Niun fra' viventi m'ama: niun, s'io moro,
Avrà di me pietà. Come l'avrebbe,
S'io di me stesso in me pietà non sento?
Tutti gli spettri di color ch'io uccisi,
Veder mi parve alla mia tenda, e tutti
Minacciarmi vendetta al nuovo giorno; &c.

In the same tragedy, Queen Elizabeth, widow
of Edward IV. makes the following answer to
Richard, who demands her daughter in marriage,

and asks how he may be able to deserve the love of the princess:

Mandale, per colui che i suoi fratelli
Empio svenò, due sanguinosi cori ;
E siano in essi i nomi lor scolpiti.
Ella allor piangerà ; tu le presenta
In quell' istante insanguinato velo,
Che degli amati suoi germani il sangue
Bevve, e comanda a lei che se ne asciughi
Gli occhi bagnati in pianto. E se non basta
Questo tuo dono, e di te degno dono,
A far che t'ami, ancor le scrivi ; tutte
Le glorie tue a lei racconta, e dille
Che svenasti i suoi zii, i suoi congiunti
Tutti, per amor suo . . . *etc.*

In the fourth scene of the fifth act of *Romeo and Juliet*, Romeo speaks thus to his mistress, whom he believes to be dead in the tomb, before he drinks the poison :

“ Oh amor mio ! oh mia sposa ! La morte, che
“ ha succhiato il mele de' tuoi fiati, non ha ancora
“ acquistato potere sulla tua bellezza ; no, ancora
“ non sei vinta dalla morte ; ancora l' insegna della
“ beltà spiega le sue porpore sulle tue guance e sulle

“ tue labbra, e la pallida bandiera della morte fin
“ là ancora non s' inoltra Ah cara Giulietta !
“ perchè sei ancora così bella ? . . . Io voglio sem-
“ pre rimaner teco, e non partir mai da questo nero
“ albergo. Quì fermar voglio il mio sempiterno
“ riposo, e scuotere il giogo delle avverse stelle, che
“ son stanco di soffrire. Occhi miei, saziare i vos-
“ tri ultimi sguardi ; prendete, o mie braccia, i vos-
“ tri amplessi estremi ; e voi, mie labbra, voi porte
“ della vita, con un pudico bacio sigillate il mio
“ eterno contrattó colla morte.”

If this tragic spirit of Shakspeare, my dear Count, has passed into you, as I think it has, it is much improved by your more extensive knowledge, and that of the age in which we live. In you, therefore, we find that which the English poet did not possess, the art of restraining his irregular fancy, and of confining it within the bounds of probability and propriety, so as to produce perfect and admirable tragedies.

Nothing remains but to speak of the poetic style of your productions. I have already said that style is the colouring of poetry ; it is equally so of tragedy. Tragedy also has its own poetic beauties ;

its own warmth. In certain places and situations we may say of writers in tragedy :

Fervet immensusque ruit.

Foaming through his course,
Rolls onward with resistless force,
His full, his deep-mouth'd song. BOSCAWEN.

We ought to be able to give the style of tragedy the appellation of figurative,* impetuous, sonorous, and flowery :

Monte decurrens velut amnis.

As swoln by floods the river's tide. BOSCAWEN.

This flowing, harmonious, and concatenated style,

* The style which I call *figurative*, is that in which the greater part of the words impress some image on the mind of the reader. Virgil possesses this picturesque style above all other poets: I shall therefore draw examples from him in a larger quantity.

Telumque imbellè sine ictu

Conjecit, rauco quod protinus ære repulsum

Extremo clypei nequicquam umbone pendit. . . .

Validis ingentem viribus hastam

In latus inque feri curvam compagibus alvum

atonies for the want of rhyme in those who write in blank verse; no trifling want in our modern poetry,

Contorsit. Stetit illa tremens, uteroque recusso
Insonuere cavæ gemitumque dedere cavernæ

Ponto nox incubat atra:

Insonuere poli, crebris micat ignibus æther

Insequitur cumulo præruptus aquæ mons

Furor impius intus

Sæva sedens super arma, et centum vinctus ahenis
Post tergum nodis, fremit horridus ore cruento

Ter sese attollens cubitoque adnixa levavit,

Ter revoluta toro est, oculisque errantibus, alto

Quæsitivæ cœlo lucem, ingemuitque reperta

Obstupui, steteruntque comæ, et vox faucibus hæsit . . .

Sibila lambebant linguis vibrantibus ora

The following examples of the same kind of ornamented style are from Horace:

Jam fulgor armorum fugaces

Terret equos, equitumque vultus

Hinc tibi copia

Manabit ad plenum benigno

Ruris honorum opulenta cornu

Obliquo laborat

Lympha fugax trepidare rivo

for without rhyme its character can hardly be poetical. I have admired this style in many parts of

Scimus ut impios
Titanas, immanemque turmam,
Fulmine sustulerit caduco,
Qui terram inertem, qui mare temperat
Ventosum, et umbras regnaque tristia.

The following are from Tasso :

Sebben l'elmo percosso, in suon di squilla
Rimbomba orribilmente, arde, e sfavilla. . . .

In gran tempesta di pensieri ondeggia

Treman le spaziose atre caverne,
E l'aer cieco a quel rumor rimbomba,

And from Ariosto :

E nella face de' begli occhi accende
L'aurato strale, e nel ruscello ammorza,
Che tra vermigli e bianchi fiori scende

Se non vedea la lagrima distinta
Tra fresche rose e candidi ligustri
Far rugiadosa le crudette pome ;
E l'aura sventolar l'aurate chiome

Sta su la porta il re d'Algier, lucente
Di chiaro acciar, che il capo gli arma e il busto ;
Come uscito di tenebre serpente.—*etc.*

your tragedies, to some of which I have pointed above ; but I ingenuously confess, as a friend, that

These are from Camoens, that every nation may have its due praise :

Debaixo dos pes duros dos ardentes

Cavillos, treme a terra, os valles sonaõ

As may, que o som terrivel escutaraõ,

Aos petos os filhinhos appetaraõ

And speaking of the sound of the trumpet :

Pellas concavidades retumbando

Os ventos brandamente respiravaon

Das naos as vellas concavas inchando

Subitas trovoadas temerosas,

Relampagos que o ar em fogo acendem,

Negros chuveiros, noites tenebrosas,

Bramidos de trovoens, que o mundo fendem.

In tragedy, the following examples are taken from Seneca ;

Mihi gelidus horror ac tremor somnum excutit ;

Oculosque nunc huc pavida, nunc illuc ferens,

Oblita nati, miserum quæsi Hectorem :

Fallax per ipsos umbra complexus abit

En alta muri decora congesti jacent

Tectis adustis, regiam flammæ ambiunt

in general, in my opinion, you have neglected it. You have attended to the sentiments without caring to dress them handsomely.

Diripitur ardens Troja, nec cælum patet

Undante fumo: nube ceu densa obsitus,

Ater favilla squallet Ilia: a dies.

I have thought proper to transcribe so great a number of examples, in order to give a clearer idea of this *figurative* style of poetical expression, which paints whatever it describes, and excites in the pupils of the Muses an ardent desire of imitation. This style continually presents to the fancy, new objects and unexpected beauties, and puts into the mouths of the personages introduced, that kind of eloquence which is proper to their situation, their characters, and their passions.

Without this style, tragedy, like every other species of poetry, will be heavy, and will have a faded appearance: although it be well designed, drawn, and disposed, it will only appear like a mere design, which however excellently and exactly it may be delineated, yet, through the want of the attractive power of colouring, will never produce the admiration, pleasure, and delight, which arises from a picture of Titian, or of Paul Veronese.

The verses of such a tragedy, however elegant and full of sentiment, will only appear as prose, divided into lines of eleven syllables. They never can produce in the

I agree that Horace says in one place:

Et tragicus plerumque dolet sermone pedestri;

The tragic hero, plunged in deep distress,
Sinks with his fate, and makes his language less.

COLMAN.

But in another he teaches us:

Effutire leves indigna tragoedia versus.

Stern tragedy rejects too light a vein. COLMAN.

I observe that throughout you have a predilection for the pencil of Michael Angelo, neglecting, as it were, that of Corregio and Albano: and when an elegant gracefulness naturally presents itself to you, you avoid it, and prefer a strong, harsh, and even rugged, expression, in the style of Dante.

mind that transport and rapture, which arises from flowery and high-coloured poetry; and tragedy in prose is a wretched invention of the present unpoetical age.

But young poets ought to be careful, not to be too prodigal of this picturesque style, for fear of falling into the bombastic. The moderation which I recommend, is not easily put in practice: it is necessary to restrain the imagination, to force our self-love; neither can it always be said when or where it ought to have place. This kind of knowledge is reserved for great poets alone.

In Philip, for example, in the second scene of the second act, you write,

Basso terror d'infame tradimento
A re, che meriti esser tradito, lascia.

This transposition of the verb renders the sense somewhat obscure at first sight : I doubt not, that you see that you might have said with greater clearness, and perhaps with greater elegance,

Basso terror di tradimento infame
Lascia ad un re, che meriti esser tradito.

In Polonice, act the fourth, scene the first, I find,

Ma il sospettar, natura
Fassi in chi regna, sempre :

Perhaps you might have written with greater clearness,

Ma il sospettar diventa
Natura sempre in quel che regna.

I desist from quoting other passages, because you will observe them yourself much better than I can : but I must observe, that this hardness and ambiguity is frequently prejudicial to the sentiments themselves, which are noble, sublime, and often new.

Corneille is certainly more majestic, and more energetic than Racine : but Racine, through the elegance of his diction, and the flowing sweetness of his poetry, is always superior upon the stage. Apostolo Zeno is more theatrical, more grave, more sentimental, and more various than Metastasio ; but Metastasio reigns, and Apostolo Zeno is entirely excluded from the stage ; an evident proof of the great consequence of sweetness, melody, and beauty of style.

Michael Angelo's picture of the last judgment is looked upon with admiration by painters ; they draw from thence foreshortenings, postures, attitudes, and delineations, as studies : but the paintings of Rubens, Titian, Corregio, and Guido, charm alike painters and connoisseurs, the ignorant and the skilful.

You have endeavoured, with great assiduity, to form your style upon our ancient models : Dante principally has seduced you, and you have imitated him perfectly. But the audience before whom your admirable tragedies must be represented, is not that of the age of Dante. Our language at that time stammered in its childhood ; now that it is arrived

at maturity it declaims with eloquence, majesty, and gracefulness. Do you suppose that if Dante lived in our age, he would write now as he wrote then,

Or mentre io gli cantava cotai note,
O coscienza, o dolor che il mordesse,
Forte springava con ambo le piote ;

and a hundred other similar oddities? No, surely. It is certainly praise-worthy to imbibe the majestic sentiments of Dante, to imitate his forcible images and nervous expressions; but I am of opinion, that they ought to be translated into the more cultivated and more flowing language of the present day. Who, at this time, will make use of his Florentinisms, and his grammar? Certainly nobody. And he, who

Quædam nimis antiquè pleraque dure,
Dicere credit eum, ignavè multa fatetur,
Et sapit, et mecum facit, et Jove judicat æquo ;

— that sometimes their style uncouth appears,
Or their harsh numbers rudely hurt our ears,
Or that full flatly flows the languid line—
He who owns this, has Jove's assent and mine.

FRANCIS.

Generally the omission of the article, as:

Patria apprender cos' è

and:

Mie angoscie

and:

Il dubitar di quanto re ti afferma ;

renders the verse harsh and scabrous.

The frequent insertion of a superfluous *io*, or the contraction of it, as :

Ne a mi tu aprirlò

Dovevi mai, nè posso io udir

and :

In petto i' mi sent' io !

renders it hard.

To say,

Del re non temi :

instead of,

Non temere del re :

and,

Nè tu men chiedi

Ragione ;

instead of,

Non me ne chieder ragione.

likewise the use of too complicated phrases, as :

Arbitro tu mi danna

A qual più vuoi castigo. . . .

O trista

Deplorabil dei re sorte!

also the addition of an unnecessary *sz*, as ;

Reo non s'è fors' egli ?

and the expression :

Tu hai per hai ;

as ;

La mia t' hai tu ;

and such like antique obsolete elegancies, cause ambiguity and equivoue, and force those who recite or read them aloud to contract their lips, in order to pronounce the verse.

I am persuaded, my dear friend, that all these modes of expression, which you have adopted, and which you might have avoided with so little trouble, are of infinite prejudice to the great beauties of your tragedies ; and I wish I were able to persuade you to take them away.

In truth, neither Ariosto nor Tasso, (great and respectable names) nor Guarini, nor Redi, nor Filicaja, nor Guidi, nor Chiabrera, nor Testi, nor

Marini, nor any other celebrated poet ever wrote in this style: and to say the truth, I should prefer, in their company, the rejection of these affectations of the days of the Guelphs and the Ghibellines, to the imitation of them, under the banners of the divine Dante, who certainly was divine for that age; but, tell me ingenuously, would he be so at present? A question which I think is already answered. Certainly, if so great a poet should be born in our days, and should obtain the title of divine for his poetry, he would never acquire it for his language.

For these friendly observations upon the style of your tragedies, as well as for some remarks which I have made upon the conduct of them, I have already given Horace's excuse. Where perfections and beauties are so numerous, trifling faults (if they really are so), do not take away the prize.

They are moles (if you will), but moles upon limbs of divine formation.

I finish, my dear Count, with two verses of Horace:

— Si quid novisti rectius istis,
Candidus imperti ; si non, his utere mecum.

Farewell ; and if a better system's thine,
Impart it frankly, or make use of mine.

FRANCIS.

I have shewn my respect for you too much in
this letter, to render it necessary to renew the pro-
testations of it in this place ; I content myself
therefore to remain your obedient servant.

RANIERI DE' CALSABIGI.

Naples,

August, 20 1783.

NOTES.

PAGE 1.—*The English are equally*] This opinion, entertained by a foreigner, of the state of our theatre, may perhaps justify an attempt to restore it to credit abroad; and shew that however it may meet with obstacles from prejudice, it ought rather to find favour generally, as public spirited, than be disregarded as presumptuous.

PAGE 4.—*That it is composed according*] Gravina exposes the pedantic absurdity of the followers of Trissino; not, indeed, in their adherence to the unities, but in a *real* pedantry, their forming their plays exactly upon the model of certain ancient ones (as the *Œdipus* for instance); and imitating their situations, merely because Aristotle praises them.

PAGE 5.—*Why as if despairing*] The reason is, that following the example of Politiano in his

Orfeo, Italy has not chosen to walk in the steps of the Greek poets, in composing for songs and recitative. I enlarged upon the subject of the material of imitation in one of some Letters on the Drama, lately published; in which the two modes of introducing theatrical music are distinguished, and it is shewn which is the corrupt, and which the genuine. I shall now add my opinion, that the Greek play, *improved upon its own principles*, is that form of serious drama, which is alone necessary to be cultivated, either in France, Italy, or England; either where the piece is declaimed, or sung. In the first place I will observe, that whichever of these modes is adopted, its form and essence still remains. Now, if we inquire the opinion of professors in the art of music, we may find that an eminent one, Dr. Burney, has sufficiently, for our purpose, described what sort of composition would give effect to music. In Vol. I. p. 171. of his History of Music, he speaks favourably, and I think elsewhere more so, of the probable effect of tragedies set to music; and in Vol. IV. p. 13. says, that narrative poetry is improper for songs, but that short effusions, such as those exhibited *in the ancient tragedies*, or mo-

dern operas, are most fitted for them ; and that Voltaire's objection to them, in the opera, was ill-founded. Does it not, therefore, follow, that a play upon the ancient model would have many qualities, if not every one, that even the musical critic could desire ? It is not to the purpose here to decide whether tragedies ought to be spoken or sung, as that acute critic Bishop Hurd has recommended : this must be regulated by the perhaps variable customs of different countries. Metastasio tells us, that his dramas were well received in whichever way they were acted ; and I have myself, at Florence, been a witness of this.

This principle of the ancient play evidently extends to comic pieces, and those of the most trifling sort. It may not be improper here to mention a circumstance, which must be deemed curious by the philosophical critic, if he reflects upon it. Owing to the theatrical prohibitions which have been established by our laws, however abstract reasoning may condemn them, there seems an opportunity afforded of seeing parts of English plays performed in recitative ; for the necessity of not interfering with the summer theatre, forces upon the

inferior theatres in the suburbs the use of recitative ; without which, and without curtailing the pieces, this sort of exhibition would be found objectionable. Whether if such an experiment were made, this new entertainment would grow too attractive to be longer winked at, I cannot say. The poetical form of our tragic pieces seems sufficiently to suit recitative : but comedy would perhaps best, for this purpose, be written in that kind of verse, which is adopted in compositions of similar character, with so much judgment, and with so striking an effect, by Mr. Anstey.

If, for the sake of variety, or any other reason, this use of recitative should somewhere or other obtain among us, the poet who composes for it might do well to attend to a remark dwelt upon by those critics who have written on the opera. They observe, that there is a greater probability in music considered as the language of the gods, or heroes of fabulous times, than as that of such characters as are generally introduced in tragedy. Perhaps advantage might be taken of this effect, and recitative invariably adopted in some such compositions as I alluded to in the fourth letter on the Drama ; which,

whether called mask, opera, or by any other appellation, might be allowed to exceed the bounds of regular tragic probability, if it delighted by raising wonder. I do not infer from the criticisms of musical writers, that they would think improper the form of drama here recommended, to be accompanied by music.

If, however, too little of the effect of music should be attainable with it, the French opera has not those abrupt transitions from long to short verses, and from blank verse to rhymes, which produces the same effect on the ear, as the mixture of prose and verse, and are by no means analogous to the varied expression even of the most opposite sentiments in nature. I had this more rational form of opera, as a poetical composition, in my thoughts, in the sixth letter on the Drama, when I spoke of varying the *verse* according to the prevailing temper of mind.

Page 5.—*Perfected by Metastasio.*] It will follow from the circumstance of their being radically defective, that they can never be perfected. The Greeks, it is true, as has been remarked by Metastasio (see the sixth letter on the Drama), set

an example to the Italians, of their mode of improperly changing the metre; but that is, where they wandered from the true principles of their own drama, which had in it the seeds of perfection, while the Italian opera is incapable of producing it. But the laws of the former would, as I have intimated in the twelfth letter, be observed to more effect, and in fuller perfection, by writers in a language that Dr. Burney remarks, partly from its own nature, and partly from the skill of Metastasio, has shewn itself, beyond others, proper for music.

The discovery which, I presume, the reader now may acknowledge both to be a real one, and not exhibited to the world before, is the only one that appears from the first edition of the *Battle of Ed-dington*. It was suggested by simple reflection, as deducible from the nature of dramatic composition; and did not, till the second edition, appear jointly with another, the result of observation and diligent study of dramatic effect, during the few years that intervened after the first, and before the second edition. This was the only one which could have attracted notice in the play, when it was criticized by the Monthly Reviewers.

Page 6.—*Most commonly to private noblemen*]

Private theatres, in which every one is either able or willing to be pleased, are excellent places to have the more famous works represented, which are found too declamatory, and possessed of too little business, to entertain a mixed audience, and on that account, to become patterns, in every respect, of dramatic composition.

Page 6.—*Those companies of actors*]

I conceive that when extreme effect, as far as is consistent with chaste writing, shall be more studied by dramatic authors, excellent acting, however desirable, will be less necessary to support a theatre, for the very reason that the decision of a mixed audience is not always that of delicate taste.

Page 11.—*Begin by establishing*]

Unless it is a country that, like England, possesses a capital both populous, and having theatres open every night in the year, every expence being borne to assist the representation; and not only at carnivals, or for a small portion of time; it will not be in the power of a prince to establish such a theatre, as will teach a poet the real demands of an audience. He will not be able to procure the opi-

nion of a large body of people, who, free to judge, habituated to observe, and unprejudiced by novelty, will applaud according to that degree of effect which is attainable.

Page 15.—*A musical stage almost constantly*] Thus had Politiano employed his great musical and poetical talents, in composing plays on the ancient plan for music, instead of inventing the opera, tragedy might have had that support in Italy, which was transferred to another composition; and we might at this day have seen, at the Haymarket, plays of the ancient sort, acted nearly in the ancient manner. It might interest lovers of literature to try the experiment of setting to music, and acting some of those already written in the Italian language.

Page 15.—*Debates on morality*] Moral and political reflections give a relief to epic composition, and are there proved compatible with good sense and poetry. In the drama they are equally pleasing and instructive, to those who can, and who cannot be delighted with such qualities. Why, therefore, introduced with the same judgment, are they less proper? Political sentiments often harmonize with

that pomp of spectacle, from which tragedy derives advantage; its characters are those, in whose mouths such sentiments are natural; and the audience delights in hearing modes of policy mentioned with praise, which are congenial with their government and education. Shakspeare, and the Greek tragedians, no less than Corneille, introduce political topics.

Page 18.—*In spite of*] Whether Johnson's judgment in this point of criticism, as well as in others, be worthy of his strong mind, let the public determine. *Adbuc sub judice lis est*. I have been led very much to exhibit my dramatic opinions in the present form, because it will shew how a person, divested of the prejudices of an Englishman, and therefore placed, as it were, in a different point of view, may consider the present state of the English stage.

As to that universal singularity, here attributed to our nation, it is more problematical. This imputation seems an echo of Voltaire's, who applies to us, in this sense, the

Et penitus toto divisos orbe Britannos.

—— the Britons ——

A race of men from all the world disjoin'd.

DRYDEN,

Page 19.—*We are often made to laugh*] I have attempted to prove, both why this is tolerated on our stage, and why it is improper. It is an illegitimate sort of stage effect, and it is possible to have a legitimate one.

Page 20.—*He mixed prose and verse*] Those who do not, as I confess myself to do, experience, in a degree, both interruption and disgust, while setting or reading out modern plays so written, may think the custom worthy of being kept up.

Page 20.—*They seldom succeeded*] It might have been prudent for Rowe or Otway, to have aspired to be the first regular, instead of the second irregular tragic writer. Foreigners then might have thought them more upon a par with the French poets.

Page 20.—*Still continues to domineer*] This is of course true: and yet fine as he is, and possessing variety from his faults, an audience does not find in every part of him that degree of stage effect which they require. It is not that they feel any

tedium at the representation of his plays; for the universal veneration he is held in, and the familiarity of most people with his works, make an audience enter thoroughly into their spirit. Happening to be once in company with a principal actor, I heard him remark this, saying, that Shakspeare's flights of poetry would not now be well received at the theatre, if it were not that almost every body had them by heart. It seems strange, that Shakspeare should have any thing in his faults in common with the most regular tragedians; but it is a fact, and may prove, that when a theatre has not been long established, and constantly resorted to, all the requisite knowledge cannot have been acquired by the dramatic poet.

Page 30.—*They are nevertheless the best in the world*] After having so justly and so forcibly displayed the imperfections of the French stage, it may seem more extraordinary that the writer should appear to prefer the poets he has been describing to Shakspeare. We may see in this the prejudices of a scholar, who knows so well the value of rules of composition, that he is less easily pleased where they are transgressed; but Dr. Warton observes

well, that the declamation of the former is no less opposite to the true nature of tragedy than the introduction of comic scenes by the latter.

Page 31.—*Of a series of paintings*] This is the most useful definition of tragedy there can be, for it perpetually summons the poet to the employment which is most necessary, that of increasing the business of the play; and in consequence, by keeping up attention to the spectacle, preventing any diminution of the interest. But though it be the most useful description of tragedy, it is a less complete one than Dr. Warton's, who says, that it should be made up of action and pathos. A picture may display pathos, but pathos may be represented on a stage, where it could not be in a picture. For instance, Raphael could never communicate to the spectator, the effect of those words of Jane Shore, which Dr. Warton quotes as so peculiarly pathetic. This definition, therefore, is more complete, as it takes in *the quality of the words*. It, however, takes in only the quality of those words which express or excite passion, and not of any interesting sentiments whatsoever. Perhaps these may be included in the definition, as remotely contributing,

by their connection with the rest of the piece, to influence or characterize the more impassioned parts. But if they are to be supposed subordinate to them, upon the principle laid down by critics, that the sole object of tragedy, is to move the passions, then action too is a subordinate part of it: and I think it plain that sentiments are calculated to form the subject of genuine poetry, and as welcome to the audience as any thing else. I therefore, allowing the two first to be of the greatest consequence, should consider tragedy as made up of action, pathos, and sentiment.

When a large company is invited to a feast, the custom is not to provide only the greatest delicacies, though disagreeable to many guests, but to suit, if possible, the taste of every one. This example ought to be followed. The mode of dramatic composition it is my object to recommend, is that which draws many of its principles solely from practice. Very noble theories have been formed by the critics, and which modified as daily observation may enable us gradually to do, are calculated to produce perfection both in dramatic poetry, and dramatic criticism. But I must ever think,

that no writer has attained that perfection; and that in England there would be the greatest scope for improvement in this branch of literature, did not the impediments to the réception of pieces at the theatres royal stand a good deal in its way.

A satirical poet,* who possesses a very pure dramatic taste, has supposed the managers to be obliged to bring forward compositions without merit, in order to gratify the taste of the audience. As I was of the same opinion, before I made the drama my study, I cannot wonder at it. The truth is, that an English audience, in respect of the *quantity* of talents displayed in a piece, is no judge; while in respect to the *quality* of them, and the question, whether they are exerted as they ought, it is a supreme judge; and its decisions, when uninfluenced by friends or enemies of the poet, to be generally abided by. It condemns a piece, good or bad, according as it is deficient in this quality; and on the other hand, it extols and delights in one, whatever its merit, which is possessed of it. Thus by exacting more effect from the poet, it may render

* See the notes of the Mæviad

tragedy in future, a more energetic, and animated species of composition.

Forming, sometimes, no less than my readers, a part of this audience, so often undervalued, I cannot help thinking myself interested in excusing it, where it ought to be excused, and in not letting the blame, when due to the managers, fall on us. I am persuaded, that the *two kings* for the time being may have been led to encourage the *national* hatred of what is *Athenian*; and everybody can witness, that there have been plays composed with thought, and therefore having some chance of success, rejected; and that others equally devoid of good sense and variety, have been brought on, and damned. This, no doubt, arises greatly from the amiable partialities of private friendship; but my purpose is only to shew its effect upon the evening entertainment of the public, as well as upon the dramatic art.

Taste is allowed to be the result of knowledge. ✓
If two sets of people consider an object, acquainted in different degrees with its properties, that object is not, in fact, the same to both; though if the knowledge of the informed were transferred to the

ignorant persons, they might prove, that it was not for want of understandings equally respectable with the others, that their judgments were more erroneous.

It is indeed certain, that no absolute harm can result from this discouragement of the drama. The bigotry and attachment to system, ridiculed in the Apothecaries by Moliere, might have been attended with the loss of health, nay, of life. But the manager may *purge* the passions, after his own manner, without any similar terrible consequence. I flatter myself, however, that in the course of these notes, I shall enable the reader to *calculate* taste, and to pronounce on the dramatic decisions of a manager, or a reviewer, by a reference *to the simplest rule in arithmetic*.

Page 31.—*To paint the sacrifice of Iphigenia*] In my Letters on the Drama, it will be seen I had then read this part too hastily to form a right judgment of what the author meant by the *story* of Iphigenia; but I knew this made no difference in the argument, and should not have hazarded any thing that could mislead.

Page 40.—*That then which agitates, &c. is not words*] I should in prudence here call the reader's

attention to this passage, in support of my system ; and also to the subsequent quotation from Horace, on which it is founded. I ask two questions ; first, has any scholar disputed that opinion of Horace ? and secondly ; if now called upon either to approve or condemn it, which will he do ?

Page 42.—*To put, as it were, every thing into action*] When these tragedies came out, I did not peruse the publication, as will be seen by the last note, with the attention I have since paid it. I had then only read the Virginia, and the Brutto Primo, of all the tragedies which appeared in that second edition. I could not, therefore, form a judgment how far the author had realized the idea this ingenious critic had, of tragedy. It will accordingly appear that I readily and joyfully gave him credit for every improvement attributed to him by his friend ; and conceived that the example of the poet exactly tallied with the precept of the critic.

But though the Count writes in a style, which, whatever fault real taste may find with it, it must be gratified by, as simple, eloquent, and energetic ; and though he has made an improvement in the drama by more diligence in presenting *single pic-*

tures (especially in the catastrophes) to the eye, and banishing from the stage the character of the confidante; yet his tragedies do not present a *series* of *more* pictures, nor, in other words, display more *action*, than others have done. On the contrary, the French poets, whom the present treatise mentions as deficient in it, have, I believe, upon the whole, discovered more: and this I attribute to the advantage they had, of a permanent theatre; and which the Count had not to assist him.

Since my Letters on the Drama were published, it occurred to me, that an increase of the action must necessarily be attended by an increase in the number of scenes. For though action is produced by various means during the course of a scene, this method cannot singly be relied upon. I now find this to be the only way Voltaire has increased the action of his tragedies; whose scenes I was surprised to find perhaps less numerous than Racine's, in his best plays: though he has properly applied himself to the easier method of producing effect by more broken speeches. But a tragedy has seldom, if ever, had its full complement of *plot*. I thought, however, there was no doubt, from the character

of them in this letter, that I should find it in the Count's tragedies; the scenes of which, as well as of all the principal ones existing, I had the curiosity to calculate; and can mention nearly what they were. The *Œdipus Tyrannus* of Sophocles has about twenty. *Samson Agonistes* somewhat fewer. Corneille's best plays hardly amount to thirty scenes. Those of Voltaire, Racine, and Crebillon have between thirty and forty; but I think the two latter of these contain the greatest number. *Elfrida* has somewhere about twenty; but *Caractacus* has as many as the latter French tragedies. Though I have not seen this play acted, I should think its not being sometimes well received must be owing to two circumstances. First, its songs, like those of *Elfrida*, and the Greek plays, are much too long to please upon the English stage. Though songs are every day found rather to increase than diminish dramatic effect, yet being prolonged, they must displease, after a time, just in the proportion they were able to strike at first. I have found nothing in the *Battle of Eddington* unacceptable to *an audience*, except the length of the choruses; but though this was only when the

music was confined to a single harp upon the stage, or a common country band ; and though they are beyond comparison shorter than those I have mentioned, yet were any alteration necessary for stage effect, it would be to curtail them. Secondly, as a means of disposing of so much song, part of the odes is recited. When I first observed this, after having remarked the dislike of the audience for any thing it was not used to, I could not help wondering that this play ever succeeded. But were the songs to be only in part sung, (as, for instance, suppose the song beginning at "Hark ! heard ye not," &c. were to have all omitted except the first, second, and last stanzas, which might be connected by altering a few letters, and putting the word "Haste," instead of "No," at the beginning of the last) and were the speeches only a little broken, it might be far from unacceptable. For, indeed, in violating the unity of place on our stage, we have not communicated much more action to our plays. Had that been done, it would have interested sufficiently without any departure from that rule. The favourite plays of Rowe and Otway do not contain many more scenes than the French plays ;

and in but a few of the popular ones does the number approach fifty. I am not here speaking of old or historical plays, which may be so long, as that the scenes, however numerous, may be too expanded to increase the action: but I speak merely of plays of an ordinary length, containing fifteen hundred lines, more or less.

The scenes in the Count's plays never amount to so many as those in Corneille's; and in general they are in number about the same as those in *Elfrida*. The Count, in his description, in answer to this letter, of the sort of tragedy he aimed at writing, says, it was rapid as far as could consist with the display of the passions; for this necessarily required some pause in the action. But an elegant writer, in particular, is apt to mistake his sublime and harmonious dialogue, for that more dramatic style of writing, which is alone in place in a tragedy. There should be sufficient pauses to produce this desired effect; but there is no danger that it should be otherwise. The fear is rather, that opportunity should be given for useless discourse, however well expressed. We do not certainly want for an authority to recommend dramas,

as dramas, which prefer thoughts to words: Aristotle has gone at least as far as critics would do now-a-days in this preference, when he affirms the fable to be the principal consideration in a tragedy. And perhaps, indeed, from the use, if not the dignity of action, it is in tragedy, what Demosthenes is reported to have said it was in oratory; not only the first, but the second, and the third quality.

Nor is it of much less use in comedy; only here the plot ought to thicken, as it were casually, and without any forethought in the characters: for it seems that neither deep contrivance, nor villainy, ought to have place in it, without an adjunct of manners so striking, as to put them almost out of view. Mr. Murphy's play of "All in the Wrong," which, excepting in the last act or two, is an extremely pleasing comedy, is said in the *Biographia Dramatica*, to be one of our busiest plays; but I think it an excellent instance of this comic action. The incidents of it, by no means arising from design in the characters, arise, on the contrary, in spite of it, and by mistake. The same may be said of Moliere's short play from which it is taken. For, as Dr,

Hurd justly observes, balconies and ladders are not properly introduced (at least in the way supposed) in comedy. Portraits, letters, and the furniture of a room, however, are much more closely allied to manners; and, a *series of comic pictures*, such as those of Hogarth, for instance, though numerous, might not displease, especially if rendered distinct by adherence to the unities.

By such a mode of writing, all might be content to have the spirit of farce banished from genteel comedy; as critics have wished it should be. What would ever recommend it, would be its powerful assistance in amusing every rank; especially the lowest. And if this could not be otherwise done, there might be an excuse for resorting to it, if we reflect upon the reason for making, of the drama, a separate species of composition: this seems to be the nature of society; which uniformly, in every country, proves the call there is for this sort of entertainment, collecting men of all orders in the state, as its spectators. Unless, therefore, an equal effort be made to please all, the drama hardly appears in character.

Voltaire boasts of the difficulty, which he himself

and the other French poets had surmounted, of filling tragedies of the usual length with incidents, and yet being circumscribed, in their means, by the unities. But when there is so much additional action, that the scenes amount in number to between sixty and seventy, this particular difficulty is almost doubled.

Page 42.—*Every play in your first volume*] These plays are among those numerous ones, which, agreeably to the precept of Aristotle, and the practice, in consequence, of many poets, end unhappily. But, if the propriety of this be philosophically considered, it may be found that those which end happily, may strike exactly as much as the others, previous to the catastrophe, but that they superadd another pleasure, viz. that of having the mind set at ease, and its ease rendered delightful, in proportion to its former pain. Nor is it clear, that the moral effect is thereby weakened. But as I think Mr. Pye has made a real dramatic discovery by consulting the feelings of an audience, in this respect, instead of acquiescing in positive rules, I shall refer the reader to the note, at the 259th page of his Commentaries; part of which expresses so

fully my ideas upon the subject, that I need add no more.

Page 47.—*Strikes the eyes of the spectators*] The catastrophe very properly, and with great effect, at the end of the play, brings the dying persons upon the stage; but part of it is previously related at large; which was some deviation from the author's usual mode.

Page 64.—*To feed with horrid delight*] If it be a fault for a tragedy to end unhappily, the aggravating nature of this proposed conclusion would increase that fault.

Page 64.—*By the example of Shakspeare*] Crebillon, rather than Shakspeare, has been thought the poet of horror.

Page 70.—*The appellation of figurative*] As the critic has used, in one of the preceding notes, the expression of *painter-poet*, in finding fault with Boileau, I am induced to warn the reader to keep two principles separate.—The picturesque style he is here speaking of, is a truly admirable one; but it is necessary not to confound this with the *dramatic picturesque*, which has to do simply with the outward senses; which is comprehended equally by

the learned and the illiterate; and which this treatise has much merit in unfolding. He seems to have been led by the resemblance of the two qualities, to rank them under one head: though had he only enforced his advice concerning style, by another precept of Horace, he would have placed his general doctrine in a still clearer light; since he would have kept it more in view. Care certainly should be taken to steer as free as possible from defects in style; but upon the whole, in this respect, the following passage may tell us, what is more immediately necessary:

— Cui lecta potenter erit *res*,
Nec facundia deseret hunc, nec lucidus ordo.

He who his *subject* happily can choose,
Wins to his favour the benignant Muse;
The aid of eloquence he ne'er shall lack,
And order shall dispose and clear his track.

COLMAN.

This I conceive to be a precept no less useful, than that which is virtually one, and which I have mentioned as the most useful definition of tragedy. The merit of it, in *teaching* dramatic style, arises from its drawing the attention *from* style, and fixing

it upon subject. The essay and notes have dwelt so long upon this main principle of the critic, that I shall say no more of it, except in producing an instance to prove, that the introduction of a chorus may contribute to this dramatic picturesque. Having some idea of publishing my play with prints, the subjects of which might have proved acceptable to the lover of his country, I requested Mr. Smirke, with this view, to give me his opinion. As the latter parts of *every* tragedy have greater animation, I expected one would have been recommended from those parts of mine; but I found he chose one, in preference, from the first act, and it is the eleventh scene of that act;—the cottager being represented kneeling. A very important part of the group must be the chorus.

But the picturesque style the critic treats of in this passage, is not what he discovers originality in pointing out; it having frequently before been spoken of with praise. Algarotti and Winkelmann, prejudiced either by the love of antiquity or system, hardly allow the talents proper for this style to our unclassical latitude. Winkelmann thinks that the sublimity of Milton, is more owing to his

filling the ear, than presenting pictures to the mind. This opinion is so evidently founded in error, that, rather than attempt to disprove it, I shall only take occasion to remark, that as poetry in a manner unites the effects of painting and music, there may be a danger least, in imitating the Greeks too closely, in one respect, we should deviate too far from their practice in another. Their harmonious language too, ought especially to warn us, not to think allowable an harsh, incorrect versification; but to make the least possible sacrifices of melody. If Pope may have missed one or two opportunities of shining as a painter, he has surely made ample amends, by never failing to delight as a musician.

Page 75.—*In the style of Dante*] I do not dispute his reasoning:—in Gray's Memoirs is likewise a sort of controversy on the subject of dramatic style. When the demands of an audience, and in consequence the nature of a *really* just drama, are by experience thoroughly known, it will then be for such masters of style as Gray to be more exclusively consulted in dramatic matters. Critics much inferior have often made remarks upon

the mode of writing proper to please an audience. They have thought the lines must be of unequal lengths, and harmony avoided in the same degree as the unities are violated; and the poetical second person singular, and the familiar second person plural, in verbs, seem both to have their partizans. But when objections are made, founded upon such opinions, I am convinced they will be soon, to all intents and purposes, silenced, merely by infusing fresh action into the piece.

Page 77.—*An evident proof of the great consequence*] I do not know how well, upon examination, this will agree with the inattention he observed, page 17, to every thing, except the airs. To judge from what we know, it might be that declamation which he observes, page 15, Apostolo Zeno had introduced, in imitation of the French. Metastasio's airs likewise might produce a greater musical effect.

Page 77.—*Charm alike painters, &c.*] May not this be, especially in ignorant minds, in a great measure owing to the subject?

When the *Battle of Eddington* first came out, it was received by the Monthly Reviewers in the

manner I have mentioned in my Letters on the Drama. Till some time after that period, I was ignorant of the *degree* of calmness with which they gave their opinion, but having then perused many of their criticisms on the drama, and finding them sincere advocates for dramatic irregularity, in more points than any persons I had met with, possessed of learning; I thought the advantage resulting to literature from the discussion which opposite opinions might call forth, would render it worth my while to take the same notice of them, as they had done of me. They are the critics, of all others, who are entitled, for the public good, to take up the gauntlet which I threw down; and if they can succeed, with every weapon of learning, I shall not repine at an issue of the contest, from which public benefit is to be derived. I will therefore explain the nature of that enterprize they may perhaps choose to undertake.

As this play was the only attempt, in the first edition, to render the introduction of theatrical music uniformly rational; so it was the only one, in the second, by increased action, to supply the want of variety constantly perceived in

plays of a more regular cast. Critics, for want of this offal of action, to appease the many-headed terror in the gallery, have seemed awed into a forgetfulness of their own natural sensations, and induced to think that propriety and correctness were not of themselves agreeable to the spectator or reader, but useless restraints, which it was advisable for the poet to shake off. I made, therefore, the experiment which was thus untried, and found it succeed far beyond expectation. How demonstrable my success was, the letters published soon after sufficiently shewed.

Yet since that, a critic who professed himself willing to recommend the play, mentioned at the same time nothing favourable of it, as a composition. In spite of the difficulty of an attempt to write at once for the *most* ignorant and the *most* learned, and in spite of my apology for the consequence, he has remarked only the faults of its style. His criticism has been similar of the Essay, though merely letters; and when one considers that it is not only replete with close reasoning, but wholly bent on developing a *new* system, one may perhaps smile

at the aptness with which those lines of Pope might be quoted :

Others for language *all* their care express——

Their praise is still—the *style* is excellent :

The *sense*, they humbly take upon content.

It will therefore better become me now, than it would have done before, to mention in what particulars this tragedy has any claim to praise. As a national play, it may be said of it, that among the poetical works intended to celebrate Alfred as the legislator of England, none have taken advantage of the friendly disposition of the sister kingdom towards us, at that time ; though it has by no means, since, constantly increased. The same may be said of Wales and Scotland. This remarkable concurrence, therefore, of circumstances had not yet struck any writer. The subjects of the choruses fall in with this general plan. The first is in praise of attachment to our country, and to its laws ; the second is in praise of Wales in particular ; the third of Ireland ; the fourth of Scotland ; and the last of England, and the British empire. As a play, observant of the rules of criticism, it may be said of

it, that besides adapting much more business than the French writers do to all the laws of their drama, it obviates the objections made to them, by contributing to prove, that they do not necessarily occasion the faults observed. It has been said, that because the place ought always to be suited to the succession of actions in a tragedy, that therefore one place is improper for them all; and instances have been adduced of the impropriety of certain scenes on this account, when compared with those preceding them. But in the Battle of Eddington, there is a particular reason (which was not necessary) for the place even of the first scene; as it is represented a strong post, in which the only house near stood, and which was necessary to be carried. The queen comes to the spot unavoidably, as a place of shelter. Ceoluph and Alfred afterwards naturally come to a place so marked, according to appointment. I pass over, as obvious, the reasons for the intermediate entrances, and proceed to that of Mervin; who may easily be supposed detached by Alfred for the security of the queen, while he himself is pressing the enemy. Afterwards uncertainty concerning her induces him, when the vic-

tory is gained, to hasten to the spot. The reason why Ceoluph enters is, that being wounded, he is brought to a house so near, in preference to being detained in the open air, and on the ground; but just as they are entering, he finds his wound too painful to move farther. What faults in other respects may be perceived, I take upon myself as the poet, and by no means allow they are naturally attached to the *poetry*. I have exhibited in the present publication a new sort of demonstrative proof, *in poetry* (no less than absolute arithmetical proof), that a work may at least be curious, and worthy the attention of the learned, from its novelty. It is now quite impossible that this should escape those who wish to recommend mine both in deed and words; and who really approve of its sentiments. The difference between this and all former ones of the sort, as it consists in the much greater number of its scenes, is to be proved by *calculation*.

Since there is a circumstance so remarkable as this to attract attention, I confess I flatter myself that the public will think it fair to suspend its judgment, and not allow that the splenetic decision of any periodical critic shall have determined the just value

of this proposed improvement, till it has been well and generally considered. Perhaps, too, those who profess themselves of the Aristotelian, or those who are either of the Johnsonian, or more than Johnsonian school (among which last are the Monthly Reviewers), may have made up their minds so perfectly to their respective systems, that they will find it difficult, for that very reason, to conceive such an improvement. I therefore rely more upon the rising generation for that credit which it claims. After he has acquired a just relish for the classics, and approved of the simplicity of the Greek poets, as well as the remark of Horace concerning the

— oculis subjecta fidelibus;

The deed submitted to the public eye; COLMAN.
the young scholar will find, upon more commerce with the world, that so far from having their precepts any longer at variance with the practice of the theatre, those authors, in some way or other, teach every *general* rule necessary to interest an audience. This must have an influence on his taste, as it must likewise tend to increase the respect paid to learning.

He will clearly understand the nature of this sort of drama, and perceive that no development

of character, nor display of pathos, or even eloquence, is prevented by it ; only the trouble is saved to managers of cutting out unnecessary speeches ; which practice has done more honour to their judgments than any thing else. He will see neither the meagreness of the French, nor the grossness of the English play : a grossness acquired by the violation of laws. He will confess some obscurity must still hang about that regularly irregular form of play, recommended by Johnson and Lord Kaimes (such as the Mourning Bride), when compared with this now under consideration ; an instance of which may be the *Œdipus* of Sophocles ; and when the whole action is not supposed to take up above two or three hours, he will find the story unfolded with a more brilliant perspicuity. He will think it by no means wonderful, that the chorus introduced carelessly as such, by Mr. Mason, should revolt on the stage, while decried from prejudice against the ancients : that it should afterwards appear there (first in the plays either of Mr. Colman, or some other person who may claim that honour), its character judiciously estimated, but its name and country unknown to its introducer, and vehemently

and prudently disavowed from that ignorance: and finally, that its powers of pleasing having been proved, it should, on that account, be now introduced the second time without disguise, and be well received. He may, however, permit to poets, who do not wish dramatic laws relaxed, merely because they dislike to obey them, not to attempt to guide others, but to reject, themselves, every kind of restraint that cramps their genius. He may even think it advisable that the reins should be fully given to the taste of the gallery, and the poet obliged to accommodate himself to its wildness, if not its proper animation, should be hurried too fast to doze after the French manner.

I do not know whether the word *superficial* may be repeated, in criticising my system; but it would be more to the point, to remark any thing of that nature, if it overthrew my arguments. It is only necessary for me to *read* effects in their causes, and to discover knowledge enough to serve as the basis of my system. Besides observing that no fault of this sort has been yet specified, I shall only add, that it has never been objected to the mathematician, as such, that he was ill versed in ancient languages.

At a time when every opportunity for expressing political sentiments discovers, in the kingdom, an increased and increasing bias towards the French; when every instance of favour towards the arts, is esteemed in them, the mark of a *great people* and the *first nation in the world*; but the cultivation of them in us, meets frequently with disrespect as inconsistent with those more lucrative pursuits to which we are accustomed to confine ourselves, and which are thought to bear exclusively the stamp of good sense; I do not know how an attempt to improve *our* literature may be received. I acknowledge, indeed, that the great body of people, which, though too often awed to silence, sometimes shews its old English spirit by coming forward, as it has done lately, to assist the country, is not willing that we should be considered as mere Helots; but the noisy and the persuasive, though a small, may prove a dangerous part of the community. At present it is too true, that the tendency of public opinion augurs ill, not only to literary efforts like these, but even to the balance of power; the real friend of which would desire, that political enthusiasm should be equal in the two countries. I

shall not, however, be deterred by this from avowedly priding myself on my discovery, though it is daring to emulate French spirit in attention to general improvement. My presumption may, I own, be thought the greater, when it is considered that the French have valued themselves, above all things, on the extreme finish and correctness of their plots, and on this account spoken contemptuously of our unrivalled poet. But if it be found, that superadded to such correctness, increased action gives a due energy to the tragic drama, even in point of art they will not have attained the utmost degree of excellence; and future examples may, probably, prove my researches to have contributed to the dramatic triumphs of my country.

POETICAL MISCELLANIES.

INCLUDING

TRANSLATIONS

FROM

PETRARCH.

By J. PENN, Esq.

LONDON:

PRINTED FOR ELSLEY, STRAND; FAULDER, BOND-
STREET; SEWELL, CORNHILL; AND OWEN
AND WHITE, PICCADILLY.

1797.

PORTLAND, ME. JUNE 11, 1871

MY DEAR MRS. J. B. ALLEN

I have just received your letter of the 10th inst.

and am glad to hear from you.

I am very well and hope these few lines will find you the same.

I have not much news to write at present, but I hope to hear from you again soon.

Yours truly,
J. B. ALLEN

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PREFACE.

THE following Poems which are, in effect, though not strictly speaking, all now published for the first time, are, in different ways, the produce of that leisure which, though coming unsought for by the lover of literature, tends equally to multiply proofs of the natural bias of his mind. Part of them are much to be attributed to the occasions which apparently called them forth; but the generality (especially the translations from originals written in the ancient languages) are owing also, more or less decidedly, to a desire I had of exemplifying some points of criticism, and of possessing a sort of memorial of those judgments, which the pursuits I was engaged in had from time to time led me to form. As these opinions, therefore, bear rather a close relation to the poems, collectively considered, I conceive that to refer to the

former, in treating of the latter, will not only be thought sufficiently to the purpose ; but that by affording new matter of reflection, it will seem to apologize to the reader for calling his attention twice to the same composition.

Before I specify any one in particular, I have only to observe concerning them all, that a finished and correct style has been attempted, perhaps in some respects successfully ; and that the example of certain innovations in the structure of the verse, and in the form of the expression (though I cannot say that they have *yet* prevailed generally) has been diligently guarded against. Instances of these are first, where an affected or improper stress is laid upon the third syllable in the verse ; as if it began in this manner :

The glad beam brightens——

Our Iambic, indeed, allows a degree of stress to be laid upon the third syllable, which often improves the effect. We find in every page verses like,

Of man's first disobedience——

And,

In these deep solitudes——

And Pope likewise cautiously, and where the sense

supports him, introduces verses running in the manner even of the first of these three examples; as,

The green reed trembles, and the bulrush nods.

Another mode of poetical expression, novel when its frequent and marked use is taken into consideration, is where the verb precedes the nominative case. The best poets have likewise used this, especially where the freedom of blank verse gave it greater propriety. We may bear possibly,

Resounds the living surface of the ground;

but it seems used in such instances as the *ne plus ultra* of poetical licence. From the remarks here made, the public will judge whether the desire I have shewn is commendable, that poets writing in rhyme should be called back to the versification and phraseology of Pope and Dryden.

The Squire's Tale may perhaps be considered as Chaucer's principal poem. In modernizing it, I have adhered more closely to the original than has been heretofore the custom in this species of writing; though I have deviated somewhat more from it than, in my opinion at least, would suit the character of mere translation. A few copies of a pub-

lication containing the present poem, the imitation of Persius, and one of the translations that follow it, have gone into the world; and a Reviewer has perceived something forced in the connection between these three compositions. But it certainly had an object; which was to exhibit the distinct characters of three modes of writing, visibly allied to each other. Whether to modernize, be any thing more than to translate imperfectly; whether he who professes to invent at all, ought not to rely much on himself; and whether the success of some poets may not have recommended a route of fancy to others, who, possessing less dexterity, might more wisely refrain from following their steps; I do not pretend to determine: but it appears to be esteemed more necessary to render the precise thought of the original, in translating a standard author, such as, for instance, one of the classics, than in shewing the ideas of those ill-fated geniuses, whose style is destined to become obsolete, clothed in the language of the day. It has been usual, in doing this, not only to add, and to omit, but even to alter the plan of the poem. And perhaps, where the object is merely to exhibit instances of the poetry of an

obscure age, or an inferior poet, this mode of composition may have its use (though certainly this end would be, if less easily, yet more perfectly attained by translation). But I have been fearful of violating the respectable relics of the father of English poetry; and indeed, when it is observed how paraphrastically this poem has been, among the rest, modernized, in the collection of the *Canterbury Tales* published by Ogle, the reverential regard for them I have discovered, in departing so little both from the general and particular sense of the original passages, will appear in a stronger light. With a very few alterations and additions, my poem perhaps might become a translation; that is to say, belong, I think, to a more valuable kind of composition.

If this poem be of a kind that does not deserve so much to be said in its praise, as translation, that which follows is of a different one, and which unites the restraint, and consequent difficulty of translation, with at least as much opportunity for original thought as the other. The name of Imitation may have discredited it in the opinion of many, being by Horace, in one instance, connected with the idea of servility: but if we estimate the task it imposes on

the poet, who meets all its difficulties, by multiplying those parallelisms which form its essence, to the degree which its nature requires, and to a greater than they have yet been multiplied ; and by letting no proper name, nor interesting passage in the author imitated, be passed over, without providing others of equal consequence to match them with, we may be induced to allow, that it would require in him some compass of thought at once to do this, and to do it to the satisfaction of his readers. Though in the best writings of this sort there may be discovered powers which have grasped more objects, and thereby shewn the all-sufficiency of genius, they have not taken in every one of these, nor derived every possible advantage from art. And unless such inventive powers are perceivable in this looser kind of Imitation, that will appear which ought never to do, and which renders the sort of composition faulty which I have just censured ; namely, that the author who cultivates it, does so merely to save himself labour, and to benefit by the labour of others. But the Imitation is no excrescence of literature, bestowing upon him who first produced it a praise unreasonably claimed,

as has sometimes happened. The use of it will, on the contrary, be evident, when we consider how peculiar and distinct it is from every other literary labour, and what an inexhaustible source of variety the lapse of time provides for it, by the private and public events of all sorts which must in future happen. The same satire that is imitated, in one century, in ever so good a manner, may in the next be furnished with new characters and events, in order to form as good, or, possibly, better parallelisms. For these reasons, I think that when Johnson said this "was a kind of middle composition between translation and original design," he said too little in its favour. Though the qualities it requires may not be all of them equal in dignity to all that are called forth in composing an epic poem, yet it admits of genuine eloquence and true poetry, and allows the display of the utmost degree of originality.

The same writer, considering this subject in an historical view, attributes the invention to either Oldham or Rochester; but says no more. Now if he is right, it appears to me almost demonstrable, from the different ages of the poets, as well as from

the dates of the composition and publication of their poems, that the honour of it is due to Rochester. If it be so, certainly his time has been by few other things so profitably employed. The honour appears the greater, when we read Johnson's remark, or rather candid confession, that "perhaps few Imitations will be found, where the parallelism is better preserved," than in his Imitation of Horace on Lucilius.

Among the odes there is one which formed a chorus in the first edition of the Battle of Eddington. I thought it did not sufficiently adhere to the rule in Horace, forbidding

Quod non proposito conducat et hereat apte.

— Odes between the acts, that seem

Unapt, or foreign to the general theme. COLMAN.

I likewise thought the correspondence of the rhymes might not be sufficiently perceptible. Yet I recollect a wish I at the same time made, that the rage for novelty would spend itself upon rhymes, instead of altering the simplicity of language. Except the ode now republished, every thing that I could at all wish recommended to attention in the first, will

be found in the second edition of the *Battle of Eddington*.

Upon the subject of *Elegy*, which a poem in that line leads me next to consider, I by no means, I believe, differ singly in opinion with that unequal though valuable critic, Dr. Johnson, where he treats of the metre * proper for it; and observes, that "the quatrain of ten syllables" has not an elegiac character, and was thought by Dryden to be the most sonorous of all metres. It may be said in answer, that Dryden had not seen its effect tried; that, at least, such an elegy as the *Country Churchyard* was not in existence to manifest it; and that the elegy may in a degree be sonorous. But that in any metre pauses may be so contrived as to vary the effect, blank verse in the hands of different poets will prove. If, in this metre, accordingly, the pauses are not sufficiently often at the close of the lines, the more irregular structure of these, may take from the calmness and solemnity necessary for elegy, and produce an effect similar to that perceived by Dryden; though his example in adopting this metre has not been followed by sub-

* *Life of Hammond*.

sequent poets in the epic line. Shenstone observed, "the public ear, habituated of late to a quicker measure, may perhaps consider this as heavy and languid; but an objection of that kind may gradually lose its force, if this measure should be allowed to suit the nature of elegy." Whatever may be the cause, whether custom or its own merits, this metre now seems generally preferred in elegy. And in either case it may be preferred justly: for even supposing the advantages of one sort of verse over another to be in a great measure imaginary, and habit and custom the chief recommendations of any; yet the peculiarity of this tends to distinguish this species of poetry in a degree proportionable to its dignity, and thus to arrange our literature in a more beautiful and convenient manner.

In order to enforce his argument, Johnson represents "gentleness and tenuity" as the character of the elegy. The works of Tibullus are certainly much marked with this character; but I do not know whether this is allowed to be a full description of it. M. de Marmontel observes there are three sorts of elegy; that of Tibullus, or the tender;

that of Propertius, or the impassioned; and that of Ovid, or the graceful and elegant (*gracieux*). The elegy of Gray is marked with calmness, but not with the qualities Johnson mentions; which hardly consist with that philosophical dignity, and those solemn, and even sublime ideas, which prevail in many parts of it. The same critic, who was not struck with Shenstone's argument abovementioned, concerning metre, sufficiently to discuss it, nevertheless praises his notion * of the nature of elegy; which he describes to be "the effusion of a contemplative mind, sometimes plaintive, and always serious, and therefore superior to the glitter of false ornaments." This seems a more complete character of it than the other; though, if we judge of elegy by the remains of the ancient elegiac poets, and by Horace's account of it in these lines;

Versibus impariter junctis querimonia primum
Post etiam inclusa est voti sententia compos;

Couplets unequal were at first confined
To speak in broken verse the mourner's mind;
Prosperity at length, and free consent,
In the same numbers gave their raptures vent;

COLMAN.

* Life of Shenstone.

we shall not think invariable seriousness necessary to it. But we have perhaps adhered more closely than the later ancients, to the primary idea of elegy. We might not, for instance, rank as belonging to it such a poem as the beautiful one of Tibullus on Sulpicia. And it seems, indeed, that poetical lamentation is capable of calling forth the peculiar beauties of each of the three Roman poets. But we permit elegy to exceed its limits so much, that "thoughtfulness" may as truly as any thing be called its character, though the derivation of the name, and its original office, may bias us to prefer "grief" to it. For our elegy either displays particular, or general grief, in other words, melancholy, which produces a thoughtfulness and regularity of style, and requires a verse adapted to itself. But even in such verse any thing light or sportive, as in the poem on Sulpicia, hardly seems to us elegiac, unless we superadd some cause of grief, though equally light and sportive. And this is the nature of the poem which gave occasion to these reflections.

The Sonnet, though of modern invention, has engaged the attention of Boileau, and other critics.

It has been, and is still in different countries often employed in celebrating trifling occurrences, which form proper subjects for occasional verses, but do not admit of much of the spirit of poetry; but I must confess I am most struck with the opinions of those who consider it as a species of elegy. It seems to me, full as much as elegy, equal to a display of the pomp of numbers: and I have often admired the grandeur of its march, with its attendant rhymes. It seems to have been well employed, as it has lately been, in describing particular places; especially when some interesting event of past times has happened in a beautiful spot: for this is a proper subject for elegy. The sonnet is too, by its brevity, fitted for the traveller, who is always on the point of visiting some new place, and receiving new impressions that will efface the old ones. It is calculated to express a single and general elegiac sentiment, before other thoughts connected with it have been suggested by the subject; and as there is the greater unity where a composition is not held together by transitions, and forms itself only one sentiment, the close relation of its parts by means of rhyme, seems to en-

force this unity, as well as to distinguish the sort of poem. Boileau thinks repeated rhyme so necessary to the sonnet, that he makes that its definition, though he gives no reason for its necessity.

As the translations are principally from Petrarch, and both in considerable number, and selected upon a regular plan, I think it necessary to mention, that a great part of these are owing to a cause superadded to that stated in the beginning of the Preface. Having been obliged by my affairs to reside some years in a country at a great distance from my own, and having settled myself in a romantic retirement, not far from a considerable city; I found, in my situation, so whimsical a resemblance to that of the poet, that this, together with his fondness for descriptions of rural solitude, first induced me to think of translating some of his poems. But after I returned home it occurred to me, in reading the *Memoires de Petrarque*, not only that a difficulty I had supposed in literature might be surmounted, but that I might, without much additional labour, effect that desirable purpose. To translate all of Petrarch must be allowed, by those

who have read him, to be a task truly Herculean. This, therefore, was not to be thought of; but to form an interesting whole, of parts of his works properly selected, was attended by the difficulty which seemed deserving of an attempt to remove. A selection with a similar object had been made; but though praise is due to one or two publications of this sort that have appeared, yet a plan to answer every desirable end was yet unformed: and this will not be doubted, when it is considered that almost all those poems of Petrarch which eminent critics have esteemed his best, have been omitted by his translators. But in pursuing my design, I thought I saw, that I should not only make Petrarch known, but should also necessarily trace out a general plan of selection, which those who collect poems for publication might judge of, and see whether it was not an eligible mode of ridding the reader, and the writer, at such times, of poetry which may have already lived long enough, and which tends only to disappoint the one, and to mislead the other. A collection of poets might thus become a work, not very voluminous, and perhaps by means of one or two poems, some part of most of the poets would be preserved. My scheme was

founded upon this idea, that a composition became justly an object of attention, in an inferior degree, from its subject, as well as from its own excellence ; so that as it is usual to preserve other poems besides those of the very greatest merit, it would be well to prefer such inferior ones as, by communicating some information, in a manner compensate for their deficiencies ; and thus to make history unite with poetry for the instruction as well as the amusement of the reader. Agreeably to this method, I have chosen the order in which the poems are arranged by the author of the *Memoires*, being that in which he shews them to have been written, and different from that in which they have descended to us ; and, as his work is formed upon the plan of a selection from Petrarch's writings, in order to let him be, as much as possible, his own historian ; so the translations I have made are chiefly from a part only of those selected poems ; that he may, in a general indeed and imperfect manner, but still as fully and as pleasingly as the poems alone will permit, be singly his own historian. With this view, I judged proper to translate first, those odes which have been esteemed, in different ways, the

masterpieces of Petrarch; secondly, just so much marked by his peculiar faults, as would enable me to shew the character of his style; and thirdly, whatever he wrote upon occasions that threw any light upon his life, excepting where the occasion was likely, either alone, or together with that quaintness and singularity of style he so often adopts, to make him too little interest either as a man or as a poet: for the same balance should be preserved between what is favourable and unfavourable in the character, represented by the verses, as in that which is collected from all the documents we are enabled to consult.

In undertaking this work, I was necessarily to be regulated by certain ideas I had formed of the nature of translation. I observed, the precept most frequently inculcated and dwelt upon was, that the translator ought to express his author's thoughts, in the same manner that he would have done, if writing in the same language. But as this manner cannot very readily be known, the precept, though intended to guard against that want of freedom, which very close translations frequently exhibit, may give too great a latitude to writers, who not

being enthusiastic lovers of art, are averse from that finish and exactness which its perfection, in principal points at least, requires. Where literal translation is faulty, it is not because it resembles the original too much, but (quite the contrary) because by a laboured resemblance of the words and sentences, the whole, including the spirit and manner, is even rendered the more unlike. The perfection of a translation would be that the words, spirit, and manner, should be exactly the same as in the original, and that there should be neither more nor less eloquence and harmony in the one than in the other. A translator is like a person who is sent out by some public body to travel into distant unexplored regions, in order to benefit his employers by new discoveries. If such a one deviate in any degree from the truth in the accounts he gives; if he introduce in his pictures a foreground, for the sake of embellishment, which could not have been in nature; or if he represent in them a striking assemblage of mountains, rocks, and torrents, where the country was of a tame and cultivated kind, he may furnish amusement, from his own imagination, to the purchasers of his book; but he

cannot be said to have acted consistently with the character he had assumed. So the translator is bound, to the utmost of his power, faithfully to represent the merits and demerits of the original. But it may happen that, with a little variation of the phrase, a resemblance may be obtained in the frame and structure of the thought, and in the effect produced upon it by metre: however, this ought to be attempted with caution, nor ought the author's sense to be either more expanded, or more compressed, in the translation. It was with this view I chose stanzas exactly, I thought, of a proper length to translate an alcaic ode, by which an English stanza might be allotted to a Latin one through the whole poem. But in modern languages, in which metre depends upon rhyme, a rule seems to me to grow out of the nature of translation, possessing strong claims for regard. If one may, by observing the same order of rhymes, and length of lines, convey to the reader instantaneously, an idea of the appearance the original makes to the eye, why should one wantonly choose in preference different ones, and withhold a piece of history of however small consequence from him?

This rule I have observed, in spite of the numerous rhymes, by which Petrarch has rendered it no slight task, even in his odes, which do not necessarily require a repetition of them.

There are, however, exceptions to this rule; for were the French tragedians to be translated, ought they to be translated in rhyme? certainly not: for an English tragedy in rhyme, is a defective composition, and therefore does not properly represent a French one in rhyme, which suits the genius of the language in which it is written.

There is something, nevertheless, to say on both sides, on the subject of the verse proper to translate an Italian epic poem: for, in the first place, the ottava-rima is not so disgusting in the epic, as rhyme is upon our stage; and in the second, we are not ourselves determined, in spite of Milton's poem, whether rhyme or blank verse be proper for epic poetry; so that we are prepared, perhaps, to allow one advantage in the verse of Fairfax; namely, that it is an index of Italian manners.

The author of the *Memoires* very justly passes strictures upon the Sestina, as being of a species of writing without dignity, and not approving of any

that Petrarch wrote, he has for that reason translated none. I perfectly agree with him in opinion concerning the degree of merit perceivable in the Sestina, and for that reason, I should have followed his example; but thinking that though the original poet was only a poet, yet the translating poet was likewise an historian, I have judged it right to give an example of one; as also to translate one ballad, and one madrigal: that every species of writing found in Petrarch might have a place in the collection.

The plan of translation is as little extended as it could well be, to answer the end I had proposed myself. I was strongly tempted not to separate from the famous ode at Laura's fountain, its sister ode. I would have added the three odes, called the Graces, upon Laura's eyes; a subject that must seem the more natural, as the poet lived nearer times when "Bright eyes rain'd influence, and judged the prize:" and that may, assisted by poetical merit, furnish a sufficient instance of Petrarch's peculiarities, and yet compensate for their want of pleasing effect. I would likewise have translated the ode on the Crusades, and that on the troubles of Italy.

With more time and labour, a more comprehensive plan might be struck out; such as to add those sonnets and other poems, by which, as well as by the poet's letters, his biographer shews the state of his mind at different times, with respect to his love, and how the behaviour of Laura, and other circumstances, operated upon it. After this, the mere English reader might be almost as well acquainted as he could hope to be with the writings of Petrarch.

The translation of the twelfth Pythian ode, (which its shortness, unity, and poetical spirit recommended,) was owing to an opinion I had formed, that consistently with the spirit of the rule I mentioned above, the strophe, antistrophe, and epode, might be used to translate out of a Greek lyric poet with remarkable propriety; but were improper for original poems in English. They may shew the style of writing formerly in Greece, just as the order of rhymes may shew that now in foreign countries; but when we recollect what strong reasons custom then furnished, for choosing stanzas so mutually connected, our spontaneous use of them, has in it something secondary and imitative. The stanzas ought certainly to correspond, but it is not

necessary for this, that they should be of more than one species, in an ode: and this accords with Gray's ideas, who thought some of those in ternaries at too great a distance from their corresponding ones. * Stanzas with a less perceptible correspondence of the verses, seem vastly well to distinguish the greater from the lesser ode.

The Sapphic ode was chosen as one which had not been yet translated, and which was strongly characteristic of a favourite poet. I did not use a stanza of sufficient length fully to render a Sapphic stanza; and therefore erred against the rule, I since laid down for myself. This translation was owing to a judgment I had formed of the celebrated one of Philips, which made me observe one point in which he adhered to nice propriety in this less essential part of composition, and two in which he erred against it. The first was in his closing the first stanza with a short line, which has an affinity to the terminating verse in the original: the other two were, first, in his adopting afterwards a different one (which changed the ode improperly into an irregular ode); and secondly, in his adopting one

* Mem. Sect. 4. Letter 20.

which, however much in use, seems hardly to deserve the name : for if the pause at the end of a series of lines be sufficient to produce the effect of a stanza, what occasion is there ever for any varied disposition of the rhymes ? An ode made up of such stanzas may be said to be, in part, composed by the printer ; in whose power it is frequently, by making its lines all equidistant, to convert it into a familiar epistle.

I have dwelt more upon these inferior considerations in composition, because there appears to exist some prejudice, especially in the drama, against a close attention to rules of criticism ; as well as a seeming opinion, that good sense, simplicity, and universal correctness, are incompatible, instead of being naturally connected with higher qualities. As I have, in some Letters on the Drama, published last year, attempted to shew the difference between a minute and delicate taste, the former of which attaches the utmost consequence to trifling beauties, which it alone can relish, and the latter is just attracted by them from that excess of sensibility which renders it tremblingly alive to beauties of a higher sort, I shall only add, that

I conceive my observations applicable to other kinds of writing also, and that even exact rhymes are, as far as they go, a recommendation to poetry when considered generally, and not in a particular instance. If the bad consequence of their restraint were, in any particular poem, to be made appear, they would be then, and by that poet, to be avoided. But however learned a critic may be, his judgments are not respectable, either of finished or unfinished composition, if he forms them by a cold reference to rules, without entering into its spirit, and thus prejudices the author. There are certainly instances of happy, negligent rhymes; and if the poet does not think he has facility enough to produce such as are unaccompanied by defects, he ought not when they occur to reject them. But no walk of genius is so respectable, that it makes any other despised. Though many painters shew undoubted talents in sketches, who, when they proceed to form finished pictures of them, gradually do away the effect they were able to produce; yet it is not their custom to inveigh against the use of colours. And if we look beyond the limits of the fine arts, we shall see that

a Cromwell, though he could not parcel out his thoughts in an admirable manner, in words, yet is allowed the character of a great man: but that we are not led, on this account, to hold in less esteem the impressive, though elaborate, eloquence of a Tully.

POETICAL MISCELLANIES.

THE SQUIRE'S TALE.

— Call up him, that left half told
The story of Cambuscan bold,
Of Camball, and of Algarsife,
And who had Canace to wife,
That own'd the virtuous ring and glass,
And of the wondrous horse of brass
On which the Tartar king did ride ;
And if aught else great bards beside
In sage and solemn tunes have sung—
Where more is meant than meets the ear.
Thus, Night, oft see me in thy pale career.

MILTON.

PART I.

IN Sarra's city once, in Tartary, reign'd
A king, who war with Russia's tribes maintain'd ;
By which there fell in arms, of splendid fame,
Full many a knight ; Cambuscan was his name.

Far through the world his merits were renown'd,
And none, in aught, so excellent was found.
In various virtue kingly, as in birth,
He made his office honour'd through the earth,
Firm in the faith which he profess'd to hold,
Of wealth conspicuous, and as wise as bold;
Rigid in truth and justice, yet inclined
To soft compassion, and of nature kind;
His person comely, fortunate his doom,
So well could he the royal part assume,
So much his qualities the observer strike,
All own'd they never had beheld his like.

This Tartar without peer, this valiant king,
Saw its fair fruits from happy marriage spring;
The younger hope, by Elfeta, his wife,
Camballo call'd, the elder Algarsife.

He had, besides, the youngest of the three,
A daughter fair, whose name was Canace.
But, to pourtray the beauties of the maid,
In vain were aptest eloquence essay'd.
At least my language in the attempt were vain,
And matchless charms my pencil rude restrain
Whose full idea rhetoric must impart
With glowing colours, and the stores of art.

'Tis mine, more humble than the skilful tribe,
Truly to speak, but plainly to describe.

It chanced, since first Cambuscan bore the sway,
When twenty winters now had pass'd away,
(As was, I deem, his custom every year)
He caused, through Sarra's streets, in accent clear,
A feast to be proclaim'd, whose lawful mirth
Might fitly celebrate his day of birth;
The appointed time, the last of March's ides.
Sol now, his station changed, with Mars resides,
Mounted in Aries, from whose angry sign
His burning beams with stronger influence shine.
Changed by his warmth, the temperate gales impart
Forgotten rapture to the cheerless heart:
And as the verdant hues more vivid grow,
Or cloudless skies the coming season show,
With shrillest melody the quires of air,
On wing, the abundance of their joy declare.
As if protections they had now obtain'd,
Nor fear'd his tyranny, though winter reign'd.

Presiding at the feast, Cambuscan bore
His crown aloft, and royal vestments wore,
Seen through the hall, at its exalted part,
And graced a banquet, plann'd with matchless art.

Of which to tell the order and array,
It sure would occupy a summer's day.
Nor could it add to my relation force,
To trace the plan of each succeeding course.
I to the narrative shall close adhere.
And so it chanced that while, the tables clear,
And, with its dainties, the third course removed,
The ravish'd king his minstrels' art approved,
In at the entrance was perceived to pass
A knight full sudden, on a steed of brass.
An ample mirror in his hand he held,
And on his finger was a ring beheld :
Unsheath'd beside him hung his shining sword,
Accoutred thus, he sought the royal board ;
And, young and old in silence wondering, all,
Their eager eyes pursued him through the hall.

Full richly dress'd, this knight, unseen before,
All, save his head, with armour cover'd o'er,
King, queen, and lords, in order due, salutes ;
And his expression so his subject suits,
That did old Gawain * come at our command,
And leave his residence in Fairy land,

* Nephew of King Arthur, and esteemed a model of
knightly courtesy.

His courteous fancy could not mend a word.
Nor he, his preface o'er, his tale deferr'd;
But with a manly voice, and faultless speech,
Observant of the rules professors teach,
To suit our action to our changing phrase,
Enforced the impressive thoughts a thousand ways.
I do not hope to imitate his art,
But the mere matter of the harangue to impart.

He said, " Both India's and Arabia's king,
" Whose gifts to you this solemn day I bring,
" Not uninstructed 'tis your natal day,
" Sends me his tribute of respect to pay
" On you this brazen steed has he bestow'd,
" Which, with strange power, transports its living
" load,
" Where'er commanded, in a day and night,
" And safe through showers directs its rapid flight.
" He, a sure safeguard in the realms of air,
" Unharm'd will carry you through foul and fair:
" Or should you wish your airy course to change,
" And lofty regions, wing'd by eagles, range,
" Not less securely would you cleave the skies,
" (Though stealing sleep o'ercame your watchful
" eyes)

" While, when you chose, and rightly moved a pin,

" Your journey back would, undelay'd, begin.

" This shining mirror, which my hand sustains,

" Gives the rare privilege, with little pains,

" To see, reflected by its surface true,

" Each ill impending o'er your state and you;

" Reveal'd to see your real friend and foe,

" Nor less in love the turns of fortune know.

" If some bright lady of your court has borne

" Its tender pains, her lover late forsworn,

" This will detect, howe'er conceal'd it be,

" His fickle soul's dissembling subtlety.

" But that this mirror, and the mystic ring

" I bear, alike commission'd from the king,

" Another mark of his regard, be kept,

" He prays that Canace will these accept.

" This ring interprets, with the truth of words,

" Each meaning latent in the tones of birds;

" And, to their sense enlarged, conveys again

" Adapted language from the mouths of men.

" Whether the hand wear this, or purse contain,

" To such as rankling wounds oppress with pain,

" It points what aid the stores of nature yield,

" And shews each useful simple of the field.

" This naked sword, that glitters at my side,
" To all were dreadful who its powers defied,
" And irresistibly would pierce its stroke
" Through mail, whose thickness match'd the
 spreading oak.
" Vain all attempts to heal the wound it made,
" Till you shall o'er it gently draw the blade.
" While yet the gifts by you possess'd remain,
" Such various virtues shall they still retain."

Thus having spoke, the knight directs his steed
Back through the assembly, and alights with speed.
The steed, reflecting the refulgent beams,
Stands in the court, and without motion seems:
The knight is led to a refreshing meal,
Eased of the incumbrance of his coat of steel.
Pursuant to his will, what presents may
Are duly borne, and without toil, away:
The sword and mirror to a lofty tower;
To Canace her ring, of equal power:
She, sitting at the feast, receives the gift;
But none may hope the brazen horse to lift.
No strength can, equal to the load, be found,
Nor crane, nor pulley, force it from the ground.
They wait, as they must needs, the knight's return,
From him the secret, you shall hear, to learn.

Now mighty throngs, attracted by report,
To see the wondrous beast o'erspread the court,
Intently gazing, and discoursing much;
Such is his size, and his proportions such!
So well his height is suited to his length!
He seems with nags of Lombardy in strength
To vie, in briskness with the Apulian breed.
For 'tis, by each spectator near, agreed,
Nor art, nor nature can increase its store
Of excellence, nor add one beauty more.
But their conceptions far it did surpass
How it could move, and yet be made of brass.
That 'twas a fairy work to some it seem'd;
But different some its origin esteem'd.
The notions, bandied in discourse by these,
Sounded like murmurs from a swarm of bees.
They love the tales they read of to rehearse,
And talk of Pegasus, described, in verse,
Like him to spurn the ground, and cleave the air:
Or 'twas the horse of Sinon, they declare,
By wicked demons to this day preserved,
To make them feel the fortune Troy deserved.
Some on the wondrous things their comments
made,
Shewn by that mirror, to the tower convey'd,

Surmising, all its virtue was derived
From angles and reflections well contrived.
Some speak their wonder of that sword, at large,
Which arm'd the champion for so fierce a charge.
They call to mind the memorable gash
Of royal Telephus, and spear of ash,
His foe Achilles hurl'd; though when its rust
Was scraped, it heal'd him with the scatter'd dust.
The nature of the weapons seem'd allied.
Now dwelt their thoughts on every method tried
To temper steel, and harden best its edge;
The time and art that its success would pledge.
These are unknown, be it confess'd, to me.
They notice next the ring of Canace;
Framed by such new, inexplicable art.
Thus talk the gather'd crowds, ere they depart.

'Tis yet agreed on, by another class,
Our skill produced, from simple ashes, glass;
But glass and ashes were unlike, in all;
Hence rash surmise might into error fall.
For, till the cause of floods we can explore,
Of tides alternate, or the ocean's roar,
Or nature's works, in gossamer and mist,
Much on its strangeness do we still insist.

Thus they indulged in various talk, nor ceased,
Till the king, rising, left the finish'd feast.
The sun his rapid course had downward bent,
The royal lion noticed in ascent,
When brave Cambuscan, from the exalted place
Where stood his table, moved, with stately pace,
Descending to the pavement, from its floor;
Whence, through the hall, the minstrels march'd
before.

Thus to his presence-room the guests retire,
While music speaks the full-resounding quire.
Unnumber'd instruments their powers unite,
And with the raptures of the bless'd delight.

Now gladdest summons to the dance obeys
Each votary gay of Venus, who surveys,
On high from Pisces*, her congenial sign,
Courtiers and dames, the adorers of her shrine.
With beating breasts the signal they await.
The king o'erlooks them from his chair of state,
There, as he sits to view the sprightly ball,
The knight's returning steps his thought recall.

* In the old astrology, Venus was supposed to exert
its strongest influence in this sign of the zodiac.

He bows, approaching, and exults to see
His partner doom'd the beauteous Canace.
The faint resemblance of the mirth to catch
In those who saw not, ere they traced the sketch,
Powers of uncommon excellence would ask,
And youth or love must prompt them in the task.
Who could describe the dance's varying form,
Or grace unequall'd, though with rapture warm?
Who the coquette's dissembled look askance,
Lest kindling jealousy should blame the glance?
Launcelot * alone possess'd a suited store
Of language apt, and he is now no more.
While yet the dance detains, the steward's voice
Hastens supplies of wine and spices choice.
The squires and ushers his injunctions hear,
And straight the spices and the wine appear.
Lest, by fatigue o'ercome, their spirits sink,
The wish'd refreshment brought, they eat and drink.
Then, in the house of prayer their duty done,
They sup, illumin'd by the rising sun.
At a king's banquet, plenty, well they know
The portion is of all, both high and low.

* An eminent knight of the round table, possessing all the accomplishments of a courtier and man of gallantry.

This it was now, with excellence of fare
Much beyond all I can imagine rare.

The supper o'er, the noble king goes out
To view the steed, and a resplendent rout,
Ladies and lords, whom courtly forms oblige;
Nor, since old Ilium's memorable siege,
Had any horse such general wonder caused,
Nor less discourse, in praise of any, paused.
The king implores the knight, when they arrive,
The theme, with more precision, to revive
Of those rare qualities the beast display'd,
And laws, in rest or motion, it obey'd.

'Twas then the horse alertly, o'er the ground,
Touch'd by the knight, began to skip and bound.
Who said, " This only will suffice, dread sire,
" Whate'er the adventurous journey you desire,
" That in his ear a secret pin you turn,
" Which from my mouth you shall in private learn;
" And, this perform'd, the country's name declare,
" 'Tis then you wish to visit through the air.
" Nor needs a safe return invention wrack;
" Another pin, so moved, will bear you back;
" And wheresoe'er the ponderous beast alight,
" Fix'd 'twill remain, in strength's and art's despite.

"Should you command it, and this pin be stirr'd,
" 'Twill vanish straight, obedient to a word,
" And at a word return, if those they be
" Which you shall instantly be taught by me.
" And trust, none else, his journey long or short,
" Will boast conveyance of a readier sort."

When from the knight the king enough had
gain'd
Of wish'd instruction, and no doubt remain'd,
With joyful heart, and of his present proud,
He sought, expected, the carousing crowd.
The bridle straight is in the tower inclosed,
Where jewel heaps of costliest kind reposed;
But the horse vanishes—I know not how,
Nor shall I dare describe; but suffer now
The revel's mirth the enliven'd guests to absorb,
Till the sky blush with day's returning orb.

PART II.

COMPOSING sleep, digestion's healthful nurse,
Winks on the band, and warning, lest, averse
From her dull presence, they her aid dismiss,
Salutes them, yawning, with a sluggard's kiss.

The o'erheated blood, they hear the power suggest,

Asks instant care, and calming hours of rest.

Thankful they hear, and one by one withdrawn,

Confess her prudence in a drowsy yawn;

Her salutary call convenient judge,

Nor, when unsafe, the dregs of pleasure grudge.

The floating fancies of repletion's brain
To tell at large, were simple as 'tis vain;
Dreams uninspired, of light effect and cause.
Each from late sleep prolong'd refreshment draws;
But not fair Canace: ere this at eve,
She of her father took her custom'd leave,
Unwilling, as becomes the modest fair,
Pale dissipation's harass'd looks to wear.
Early she rose, no morning slumber sought,
For the loved presents still engaged her thought,
The wondrous ring, and mirror deem'd so strange.
Oft did her cheek with blushing rapture change,
Nor even in sleep, from pleasing care exempt,
The fair one only of her mirror dreamt.
Hence, ere the sun was high, till waking heard
The matrons, to her service proud preferr'd,

She call'd: obedient they attend, but say,
None yet is stirring, and 'tis hardly day.
"Wearied with sleep, 'tis my desire," she cries,
"Straight to walk forth, and instant I would rise."
With busy thought, assured of her resolve,
How best to do her pleasure they revolve.
The train are trooping at her call survey'd;
Nor later shines, attired, the royal maid
Like the bright sun that, free from clouds, displays
As now, in Aries, more refulgent rays.
Thin vapours only o'er its surface spread,
To sense enlarged, a ruddy light it shed,
When she, in habit for the season fit,
Few of her train, prepared the house to quit.
Along the shady park her way she took,
Fill'd now with joy, where'er she chanced to look,
By every charm that graced the gaudy spring;
Now struck with wonder at the magic ring,
By which to her the sylvan quire express'd
Their inmost thoughts, yet only sooth'd the rest.

To shun the likeness of a style prolix,
And with no story vain digression mix,
Will profit him who undertakes to rule
The passions, less obedient when they cool.

Lest in my tale description I should waste
On wearied spirits, to its end I haste.

High on a tree, beside whose root the sod,
With sportive joy, the beauteous princess trod,
A falcon perching sent a plaintive sound,
That pierced afar the shadowy region round.
With either wing it smote its breast, that bore
The vestige of its beak, in gushing gore.
By nature's laws had tears distressful flow'd
From eyes of brutes, that inborn feeling shew'd,
No furious tiger had the sight withstood,
Nor any ruthless rover of the wood.
For to the man who best the merit knew
Of falcons, praise had never seem'd so due;
Nor thus could any shape or plumage boast,
It seem'd some present from a distant coast.
So fast the blood distill'd from every wound,
This falcon nearly with its loss had swoon'd,
And tottering, as it clung, with feeble feet,
Scarce on the branch maintain'd its lofty seat.
The king's fair daughter, Canace, who brought
Not only means to explain her secret thought,
But power sufficient, in the ring she bare,
To hold discourse with every bird of air,

The meaning of its mournful accents knew,
And, with a look of pity, nearer drew.
Below the tree she stretch'd her pendent skirt
To save in such a fall its limbs from hurt,
When next it fainted, (which might soon arrive,
The falcon scarce, with loss of blood, alive),
There long she stood expecting; but express'd
At last the sympathy that sway'd her breast.
"What is the cause, instruct me," said the fair,
"Why you these unexampled sufferings bear,
"Thrilling each ear with piteous plaints the while?
"Is it some favourite's death, or lover's guile?
"For of all ills, to feeling breasts, the chief
"Are these, and sources of the bitterest grief.
"No other tale, I know, have you to tell,
"Who, your own passion's victim, prove full well
"That selfish terror wakes not your regret,
"Nor have I seen a foe your safety threat.
"Shew to yourself some pity, I implore;
"Else whither will this tend? for ne'er before
"One instance have I view'd, with troubled thought,
"Of bird or beast that thus its sorrow sought.
"My heart these symptoms of misfortune wring.
"Ah! leave yon bough, and truly, as I spring

" From royal parents, if the power be mine,
" And the sad cause appear why you repine,
" Ere night the ill its remedy shall find ;
" (So help me, heaven, as I have this in mind !)
" And I, that pain no longer may disturb,
" Will to your wounds apply each healing herb."

Then, in the saddest accent, since her birth,
The unhappy falcon shriek'd, and fell to earth.
She seem'd, as senseless as a stone, to fall ;
When, bent life's wonted functions to recall,
The beauteous princess, pitying her mishap,
Transferr'd the mourner to her friendly lap.
There laid, and cherish'd, from her trance she
woke,

And in the mother tongue of falcons spoke.

" That tender hearts are best prepared to know,
" From their own pain, the extent of others
" woe,

" Both by the opinions which the wise maintain,
" And wide example's daily proof, is plain.
" All gentleness from gentle hearts proceeds ;
" And yours, I see, for my affliction bleeds,
" Enchanting Canace, and ills which vex
" Feels with the promptness of your softer sex.

" 'Tis not my hope your proffer'd aid to earn,
" But wish that you, what you inquire, may learn,
" And in my sad experience be supplied,
" A useful lesson, and a certain guide."

While one thus speaks her grief, the other hears
Oppress'd with thought, and deluged with her tears.
At length the falcon bade the princess pause,
And, sighing, thus declared her sorrow's cause.

" Here was I bred (the recollection shocks)
" And our nest poised on yonder ridgy rocks.
" Each tender treatment which the unfledged re-
" ceive,

" I had, and knew not what it was to grieve,
" Till first abroad I dared direct my flight :
" There a young hawk attracted soon my sight.
" All mildness, as I fancied, he appear'd,
" Nor thoughtless love his treacherous falseness
" fear'd :

" So did he wear humility's disguise!
" Such shew of truth, such fondness met my eyes,
" So freely youth's gay pleasure he enjoy'd,
" So lively was his grief, when ills annoy'd,
" None dream'd deceit had in his actions part;
" But what seem'd greater worth, was deeper art.

" Even as a snake his form in flowers conceals,
" Till he who passes, late his risk reveals;
" Even so this bird, in tenderness a dove,
" Feign'd soft obedience, and attentive love,
" And lavish of professions soon believed,
" This artless breast, in luckless hour deceived.
" As on some tomb rich sculpture we survey,
" But putrid lurks below the unsightly clay;
" Such was the hawk, and thus his purpose screen'd,
" That none could search it, save the inspiring
 " fiend.
" And he so press'd a suit, the task of years,
" With kind upbraidings, and with treacherous tears,
" That my poor heart, which well he knew to move,
" Lest love so violent his death should prove,
" Granted whate'er, protesting truth, he craved,
" And only from the wretch my honour saved;
" This point agreed, our union's single bond,
" His should I be, as he was truly fond,
" His should each thought, within my bosom hid,
" Each claim of lawless gallantry forbid.
" Heaven knows this promise I required as just;
" But leagues, with treacherous falsehood, who can
 " trust?

“ Soon as the tiger-hearted suitor found
“ Love had his wishes, unresisting, crown'd,
“ Our vows exchanged, a master in deceit,
“ He fell, with seeming reverence, at my feet.
“ With gentle manner, and with soft address,
“ Much joy pretending at his new success,
“ In art even Jason, fortunate beheld
“ Through love, and Trojan Paris he excell'd.
“ Nor, since two wives to Lamech link'd, began
“ First to display the roving bent of man,
“ Nor even since him, the father of mankind,
“ Such depth of guile could observation find.
“ Rank'd by their art, beneath him those of old
“ Deserved not menial offices to hold.
“ None could with thanks so winningly requite.
“ To mark his manner was a heavenly sight ;
“ And none more shew'd, of all the race of birds,
“ How graceful gesture dignifies our words.
“ If full of truth he seem'd, his merit such,
“ The thought unjustly would be deem'd too much,
“ I to his interest spared, with wakeful zeal,
“ Used, like my own, his slightest woes to feel.
“ In all, his honour'd will to mine gave law,
“ Save where obstructed I my duty saw.

" The worth that makes obedience sweet had he :

" Not power itself possess'd such charms for me.

" Two years and more this heavenly dream en-
" dured,

" And of his fondness I was well assured ;

" But fortune had resolved that he, at last,

" Should leave the scene of our enjoyment pass'd.

" To tell my sorrow were superfluous pain,

" And all my power in such a labour vain ;

" But this I can affirm (nor waste my breath),

" Now do I know what are the pangs of death.

" He took his leave one inauspicious morn,

" Seeming constrain'd, in accent so forlorn,

" That when I hear'd him speak, in plaintive tone,

" I thought his grief as poignant as my own.

" Yet, such had seem'd his truth, I fear'd no

" more,

" Nor dreamt of harm, his urgent business o'er.

" Till 'twas dispatch'd, enduring what must be,

" I made a virtue of necessity.

" My grief, dissembling, though by him unshared,

" Near him I stood, and solemnly declared,

" By holy John, as to our tie was due,

" My future life should, as my past, be true.

" I need not, what he answer'd, here rehearse :

" None better speaks than he, and none acts
" worse.

" At length he bent his flight to distant fields.

" When rest full leisure to reflection yields,

" This dangerous adage ruled, I deem, his mind,

" ' All are on earth attracted to their kind.'

" Perhaps 'tis noticed by the race of man ;

" And change and novelty no less its plan.

" For birds in cages sumptuously are fed,

" Their floor below with softest covering spread ;

" And servants store, as waiting on their lord,

" Of honey, sugar, milk, and bread, accord ;

" But, when the unfasten'd slider is drawn up,

" The joyous prisoner spurns his brimming cup ;

" Swift to the woods escapes, in folly firm ;

" And dainties leaves, contented with a worm.

" No sense of interest, and no sacred tie

" Can with variety's allurements vie.

" Such proved my faithless mate, accursed the day !

" Though sprung from generous sires, and young,

" and gay,

" Comely in person, humble, yet not shy.

" He saw a kite, of winning figure fly ;

"He saw—and loved! and with relentless haste,
"His falcon's image from his mind effaced.
"His love now honours the detested kite,
"And I in vain deplore my ravish'd right."

Fast, as she ended, from the falcon flow'd
Her tears: she fell again, a senseless load.
Whom, in her lap, fair Canace receives.
The train attendant, with the princess grieves,
Prompt each attention to the oppress'd to shew,
And shrill resounds the voice of female woe.
Homeward they bear the falcon, faint and weak,
And bind the wounds inflicted by her beak.

The princess herbs from fields adjoining bears,
And salves, the pride of housewifery, prepares,
To heal her bird, and, form'd with care its shed,
Suspends it anxious at her couch's head:
'Tis painted all within of sober blue,
Unchanging constancy's peculiar hue;
But green denotes a fickle bent without,
Where every bird whose faith is held in doubt,
Titmice; and hawks, and owls, appear to stand,
And the pie hops, with ceaseless noise, at hand.
Her presence, still importunate observed,
Like chattering censure, shew'd what they deserved.

Here will I leave the falcon, day and night
Tended with care by her protectress bright ;
Nor more describe the wonders of the ring,
Till I may show the reconcilment spring
From good Camballo's offices benign,
And the wild hawk his lawless love resign.

Now I proceed to speak of battles dread,
Where, fired with glory, valiant Tartars bled ;
And strange adventures, filling with amaze,
Of fame, unequall'd in all former days.

First will I tell you of Cambuscan brave,
To whom proud conquest many a city gave ;
Next him, who Theodora had to wife,
In battle won, the valiant Algarsife,
Condemn'd through danger to delight to pass,
And only rescued by his horse of brass ;
Then will I tell you with what champion fought
The adventurous brothers, who the princess sought,
The beauteous Canace ; thus hard to win :
And still, where I left off, will next begin.

* * * * *

P E R S I I

SAT. VI.

ADMOVIT jam bruma foco te, Basse, Sabino?
Jámne lyra, et tetrico vivunt tibi pectine chordæ?
Mire opifex numeris veterum primordia vocum,
Atque marem strepitum fidis intendisse Latinæ,
Mox juvenes agitare jocos, et pollice honesto
Egregios lusisse senes. mihi nunc Ligus ora
Intepet, hybernátque meum mare, quà latus ingens
Dant scopulì et multâ littus se valle receptat.
“Lunai portum est operæ cognoscere, cives.”
Cor jubet hoc Ennì, postquam destertuit esse
Mæonides Quintus pavone ex Pythagoreo.
Hic ego securus vulgi; et quid præparet Auster

PERSIUS,

SIXTH SATIRE,

I M I T A T E D.

TO THE REV. MR. MASON.

ARE Aston's hearths yet summon'd to supply
The needful heat autumnal days deny?
O skill'd to draw from British harps anew
Those martial sounds that fear of death subdue,
Or soothing, shew the sufferings love can cause,
The grief of shepherds, and the garden's laws;
With storms already, Mason, rings my shed,
And sullen fogs o'er Thames's banks are spread,
O'er the proud castle, and the forest shade,
"By godlike poets venerable made." *
For so the bard in whom we all admire,
And own, transfused, the mighty Homer's fire.
Careless of critic tongues, I shape the soil
With changeful fancy, and uncertain toil;

* Windsor Forest, ver. 270.

Infelix pecori ; securus et angulus ille
Vicini nostro quia pinguior ; et si adeò omnes
Ditescant orti pejoribus : usque recusem
Curvus ob id minui senio, aut cœnare sinè uncto,
Et signum in vapidâ naso tetigisse lagenâ.
Discrepet his alius. geminos, horoscope, varo
Producis genio. solis natalibus est qui
Tingat olus siccum muriâ vafer in calice emptâ,
Ipse sacrum irrorans patinæ piper. hic bona dente
Grandia magnanimus peragit puer. utar ego, utar :
Nec rhombos ideò libertis ponere lautus,
Nec tenuem solers turdarum nôsse salivam.

Careless I hear the rainy winds resound,
Or wait their influence on my flocks around.
And if the trite complaint, that upstarts proud
Rise o'er our heads, and every parish crowd,
Assail me, little it disturbs that I,
Fallen from a sire's and grandsire's dignity,
Equal those older ancestors alone,
Whose guiltless eminence the shire will own.
Must I, for this, grow gray before my hour,
Or hail with rapture compound interest's power;
Hoard at the expence of comfort, meanly dine,
And drink the cheapest, and the worst, of wine?
But turns are different: of two twins, the one
Will, save on feast days, all indulgence shun,
Then, for himself, he cooks his treat of sauce,
And follows custom with the lightest loss:
The other, gallant spirit, heaps his board
With meats the richest only can afford.
But, if I would not, angry that they shine,
Toil lest their wealth be reckon'd more than mine,
So neither would I rival their expence.
Scarce 'twere in me a bearable pretence
With turtles fresh my servants' hall to cheer,
Or use my taste to every dish that's dear.

Messe tenus propriâ vive : et granaria (fas est)
Emole. quid metuas ? occa. et seges altera in
herbâ est.

Ast vocat officium. trabe ruptâ, Bruttia saxa
Prendit amicus inops : rêmq̃ue omnem, surdâque
vota

Condidit : Ionio jacet ipse in littore, et unâ
Ingentes de puppe Dei : jamque obvia mergis
Costa ratis laceræ. nunc et de cespite vivo
Frange aliquid : largire inopi, ne pictus oberret
Cæruleâ in tabulâ. “ Sed cœnam funeris hæres
“ Negliget iratus, quòd rem curtaveris : urnæ
“ Ossa inodora dabit ; seu spirent cinnama surdum,
“ Seu ceraso peccent casiæ, nescire paratus.
“ Túne bona incolumis minuas ? ” sed Bestius urget
Doctores Graios : ita fit, postquam sapere urbi
Cum pipere et palmis, venit nostrum hoc maris
expers,

Fœniseçæ crasso vitiârunt unguine pultes.
Hæc cinere ulterior metuas ? at tu meus hæres,

Our bounds are clearly traced : our incomes shew
How far the wants of moderation go.
Empty your barns ; next year they will be stored.
Perhaps, 'tis duty warns, our aid implored.
Some friend a gainful voyage hopes, till, mark !
Blown on the rocks of Scilly, splits his bark :
His all is lost, and to the distant eye
The shiver'd wreck, emerging, points on high,
Where sea-gulls haunt, amid the ocean's roar :
He gains with labour Cornwall's dreary shore.
That he may save some portion of renown,
Nor bear a mean petition through the town,
" Can we not sell ? " Cries one, " with acres part !
" I know whose heir would take it much to heart.
" Scarce would his funeral decently pass off :
" At promised pomp the nettled squire would scoff.
" What ! with impunity the estate impair ! " —
But philosophic Gray would little care,
And, by the forty sages unperplex'd,
Hold, such degenerate wants our nation vex'd
Since they taught wisdom, who long taught to dance,
And to ape Reason, was a mode from France.
Then let us fearless look beyond the grave.
But you, strange heir, a word with you I crave.

Quisquis eris, paulùm à turbâ seductior, audi.
O bone, num ignoras? missa est à Cæsare laurus
Insignem ob cladem Germanæ pubis, et aris
Frigidus excutitur cinis: ac jam postibus arma,
Jam chlamydas regum, jam lutea gausapa captis,
Essedâque ingentésque locat Cæsonia Rhenos.
Dis igitur, Geniôque ducis centum paria, ob res
Egregiè gestas, induco: quis vetat? aude.

Suppose you claim, as mine, this mansion fair
Past to *heirs general*, or the Lord knows where.
I now would whisper. In the glorious cause
Of Gallic freedom, and of Nature's laws
A junto firm, who well their lords obey,
Write of their sure successes from Vendée :
The prompt Convention every line repeat.
Now sans-culottes in Reason's temple meet.
Gay civic feasts with patriot kisses join ;
For soon we read of triumphs on the Rhine.
Of these the stage takes charge, and, o'er the scene,
Ennobled generals stir the people's spleen.
Rank's ermined train in all their pride advance,
And sovereigns arm'd the warlike pomp enhance.
But what are such when Liberty's alarm
Swells her loud voice, and lifts her thundering arm ?
She proves her sons, as on this festal night, *
Brightest in virtue, boldest in the fight.
Can any doubt of Gallic freedom's bliss ?
But, not to keep you, what I mean is this.
Whoe'er, of oratoric powers, command
The applause, in clubs, of the reforming band,
Since the millenium seems no more remote,
Shall, on my banker, have a general note.—

Væ, nisi connives. oleum artrocreásque popello
Largior ; an prohibes ? dic claré. " Non adeò,"
inquís :

" Exossatus ager juxtà est." Age, si mihi nulla
Jam reliqua ex amitis, patruelis nulla, proneptis
Nulla manet : patruì sterilis matertera vixit,
Déque aviâ nihilum superest : accedo Bovillas
Clivúmque ad Virbî. præstò est mihi Manius hæres.
Progenies terræ ? quære ex me, quis mihi quartus
Sit pater, haud promptè, dicam tamen. adde etiam
unum,

Unum etiam : terræ est jam filius : et mihi ritu

I mean the needy. Heavens! how pale that face!

Nay, storm not; I can fancy a worse case.

Suppose I add the libellers to these.

"Good sir," you say—"reflect sir, if you please,

"Should you reduce me to your country seat,

"Gravel, I own, is healthy, clean, and neat,

"Yet too much there, for such demands prevails;

"Which ask a fertile mould that never fails."

Though now it seem some pretext claims respect,

'Tis plain, whate'er I do, you will object.

Know then, had you and friends no legal right,

'Twould be my anxious business, day and night,

To use my power, and a successor find,

As prudence, or perhaps caprice, inclined.

That will I now; nor need I travel long

Ere shine some open aspect in the throng:

Some petty freehold's lord shall boast a name

From royal licence, and be raised to fame.

How superciliously you note his birth!

But we are all inhabitants of earth.

Look on our pedigree; how short appears

That string of ancestors your pride reveres,

And knew we more, I possibly might see

This honest yeoman is allied to me.

Manius hic generis propè major avunculus exit.
Qui prior es, cur me in decursu lampada poscis?
Sum tibi Mercurius: venio Deus huc ego, ut ille
Pingitur; en renuis? vñ' tu gaudere relictis?
Deest aliquid summæ: minui mihi: sed tibi totum est,
Quicquid id est. ubi sit fuge quærere, quod mihi
quondam

Legârat Tadius: neu dicta repone paterna;
Fænoris accedat merces; hinc exime sumptus.
Quid reliquum est? reliquum? nunc, nunc, impen-
sius unge,

Unge, puer, caules. mihi festâ luce coquatur
Urtica, et fissâ fumosum sinciput aure,
Ut tuus iste nepos olim, satur anseris extis,
Patriciæ immeiat vulvæ? mihi trama figuræ
Sit reliqua: ast illi tremat omento popa venter?

Cousins of every kind I next should trace
To Adam, father of the human race.
Our tie, you hold, is no conjecture vague:
Then why more plague me than even strangers
 plague?

By me, at least, you cannot fear to lose:
Take as you find me, or your chance refuse.
The fortune I received, though render'd less,
You, by the laws of England, will possess:
And do you ask, how much I mean to save
Of what a father, in his goodness, gave?
Preach you retrenchment, in old-fashion'd strain,
And hope my capital may whole remain?
But avarice works again: you sum the amount.
Presumptuous wretch! I'll settle this account.
Haste ye, my servants, to the city fly;
Nor heed the price, but every dainty buy.
Bear round my cards; for I am wiser grown
At length: I will, I will enjoy my own.
Shall I abstain, that this low wretch, grown nice,
May seek the palm of fashionable vice?
May win new glory from successful bets,
In favours paid some noble beauty's debts?
Like a pale ghost, shall I appear; but he
Owe bloated looks to what he gains from me?

"Vende animam lucro: mercare; atq; excute
solers

"Omne latus mundi, ne sit præstantior alter

"Cappadocas rigidâ pingues plausisse catastâ.

"Rem duplica." Feci; jam triplex, jam mihi
quartò,

Jam decies redit in rugam. depunge, ubi sistam,
Inventus, Chrysippe, tui finitor acervi.

"Consult our interest," would he whisper still.
"Go, sue for places you're unfit to fill.
"For these by turns give fiercest foes support.
"Beset the minister, and ply the court,
"Scorn'd while you cringe; and wean'd from power
 "your heart,
"Lose independence, its far nobler part."
What must I? 'tis resolved; no more I blame.
You have me, humble, as befits, and tame.
One annual thousand, with all profits clear,
Ushers the thriving pensioner's career.
Now four are added. When content you'll tell.
Behold six more, and own 'twas managed well.
Still silent? now six more my arts obtain.
Not yet enough!—To slave for you is vain.
Who to the limits of desires could reach,
Lax, as the logic of a patriot's speech?

ODE

WRITTEN AT THE GERMAN SPA.

1782.

ELYSIAN scenes, that now, once more,
Ere six revolving years are o'er,
Allure my voluntary feet
To trace the paths, thick branches shade,
Or near the rill, or in the glade,
Their pleasing toil repeat ;

I come not, tortured by disease,
To seek the boon of healthful ease ;
At pitying Nature's bounteous hand ;
Nor, where yon crystal fount distils,
With real, or with imaged ills,
To join the eager band.

Grateful for blessings own'd, yet now,
O let me, on this shrubby brow,
Unnoted by the mirthful throng,

Pour, as the favouring Muse's fire,
And heaven's beneficence, inspire,
My solitary song.

Hygeia here perfumes the gales,
And o'er the labourer's pains prevails;
Here Science may her votary save,
Or Europe's statesmen life imbibe,
And lands their destiny ascribe
To the salubrious wave.

Yet, not to outward cures confined,
The body from the kindred mind
Full oft has borrow'd a resource;
And Fancy oft, successful, tries
The sweet enchantment of Surprise,
To instil returning force.

For not in vain such glories, sure,
Those towering oaks, these glooms obscure,
And mountains thus abrupt, are given,
Whose sides, with mossy cloathing brown,
The shatter'd torrent thunders down,
By Oreads headlong driven,

Discovering now its progress hoar ;
Now deadening behind rocks its roar ;
And now that, born, a silent stream,
Along the fertile valley, strays,
And clear o'er pebbles rolls its maze,
That trembles to the beam.

The beauties of the varied view,
The whispering air, the heaven's hue,
Of power to remedy may prove ;
The timid cuckow's distant call,
And, through each swell, and melting fall,
The music of the grove.

Each note is of a charm possess'd,
May sooth some rankling care to rest,
Or pleasure new, to heal, impart ;
On all the foliage magic hangs ;
And warbling brooks to bitter pangs
Apply their lenient art.

Far as the exalted eye beholds,
The Genius of the forest folds
With smiles, around, his verdant robe ;

And marshes dank, and wilds untrod,
Rejoicing, feel the present God
Re-animate the globe.

A tract, that, under Winter's sway,
Through all the dark, tempestuous day,
Fierce wolves astonish as they howl;
Now leave, and into caverns go,
When whistling winds have ceased to blow,
And skies no longer scowl!

Even while I sing, the entrancing sight
Casts o'er my soul a sudden light;
The vital currents freer glide;
And every damp oppression leaves
My bounding heart, that, glad, receives,
And sends, the genial tide:

Unwonted strength my members own;
Languor recedes, and Toil is flown,
As round my raptured gaze I bear,
And see, beneath the sky serene,
Its fullest flowers and richest Green *
The Summer landscape wear.

* ——— gay Green,
Thou smiling Nature's universal robe. THOMS. Spring.

ODE

TO H—— V——, ESQ. ON HIS EXPLOITS
AT ALGIERS.

Non hæc jocosæ conveniunt lyræ.

V—— the adapted chords to explore
I hasten, pleased ; and yield applause,
Just to the worth that graces more
A noble cause :

Thy worth, that taught the lawless crew
What power may pass the midway flood :
What England's dreaded arms may do,
And gallant blood.

On the rich coasts Columbus show'd,
A V—— reap'd victorious praise ;
A V—— Lybia's squadrons strow'd
In later days.

Echoing sublimely through the air,
Those deeds may loftier bards inspire,
Nor doom to warlike themes, though fair,
The Lesbian lyre.

Rather be mine to trace aright
Thy hail'd return, than issuing course ;
Painting, in Love's attacks, the might
Of Battle's force ;

As to the city thee thy stars
Again, with fame augmented, brought,
And troubled, shewn the British Mars,
Each virgin's thought.

Long each thy grace enough approved,
Wavering ; but pride new merits quell,
As numerous axes, soon removed,
The beeches fell.

Stern Courage, arm'd by Love, arose,
And Enterprize, that never rests,
Thy prompt reserve : too mighty foes
For tender breasts !

O say, what Nymph's soft homage calls,
Whom haply her duenna keeps
Watchful, or less severe inthralls,
While Honour sleeps?

Perhaps, her chamber near, at eve,
When all is rapture, or repose,
To notes, that in accordance grieve,
Thou tell'st thy woes:

The heavens, the placid moon, the strings
Her melted soul, consenting, try;
And Love steals inward, on the wings
Of Harmony.

She mutters, " Love has known alloy
" Ere even sad Helen's act forbid:
" The scourge, that lash'd lamenting Troy,
" Now strikes Madrid.

" He sues, my slave, for favour, he
" Who binds imperious hearts in chains:
" For me the voice awakes, for me
" The lute complains.

" Those laurels that, from Algiers born,

" Aloft adorn'd his victor-brow,

" Cast at my feet, his chance to mourn,

" Endear his vow.

" Strange ! that loud Strife, and War's alarm,

" And deeds of noon, Desire invite ;

" Desire, that wanton Whispers charm,

" And silent Night !

" Strange ! that sore wounds, which writhe in pains,

" And features we adore deform,

" The boiling current of our veins

" More inly warm !

" Ye saints, in heavenly realms afar,

" Daily preferr'd, religious hosts ;

" That, in full ranks, the calendar

" Recording boasts ;

" Nor all your numbers from its lures

" To wrest this struggling heart avail :

" My prayers mount fruitless, and, with yours,

" My efforts fail."

ODE

ON THE BACKWARDNESS OF SPRING,

WHY, rugged Winter, dost thou still
 Thy transitory sway resume?
 Late, o'er the grove, and cheerless hill,
 Did gentler winds our bosom fill
 With rapture, and succeed thy gloom.

Late azure heavens appear'd around,
 For snow, that veils the sable sky,
 Rages in air, and heaps the ground ;
 While herds and men, wherever found,
 To refuge and to comfort fly.

Thus oft our eager purpose fails,
 And Ardour fruitless ends pursues !
 But come, ye balmy breathing gales ;
 Come, Zephyr, to the frozen dales ;
 Come, simple sounds, and vernal views.

Crown'd with new leaves, shall instant Spring
To mute Despondence bear her aid ;
And as the woods responsive ring,
Her hues, o'er all, her odours, fling,
And beckon to the flowery shade :

Or, in the pastures while I stray,
Beneath green boughs will rivulets meet ;*
Where, shelter'd from the cloudless day,
The fisher waits his silvery prey,
Or cattle shun the noontide heat.

With the gay labours of the field,
The season hastes, restrain'd too long,
With joys, that lawns, that copses yield,
Love's flame, through Nature's bounds reveal'd,
And Hope, to elevate the song.

* Just in the dubious point, where with the pool
Is mix'd the trembling stream ———
There throw, nice judging, the delusive fly.

THOMSON.

ODE;

BEING A CHORUS IN THE FIRST EDITION OF
THE BATTLE OF EDDINGTON.

LET Worth, let Patriot Zeal, with eye
O'erflowing, and with drooping head;
Let all who venerate the mysterious tie
Of wedded Love, or Power bemoan,
Chased to the refuge of the obscure retreat
By savage foes, o'er his dominion spread,
Respect the pathless marsh, where mingling meet
The stores of Parret and of Thone.

While,* heedless of himself, the Chief
But labour'd for his country's good.
There his loved partner long partook his grief,
Among a circling infant race.
There long, the cause of England to support,
His subject-squadron every bribe withstood

* Pharsalia, lib. 2. ver. 241.

Of Want, unblamed Misfortune taught to court,
And cherish undeserved Disgrace,

If e'er Repose, and hoped Success
Reward the battle-wasted bands ;

If e'er the counsels sage of Alfred bless
With promised law the impatient realm ;

Long hence the thoughtful Briton shall exclaim,
As on the bank, with folded arms, he stands ;

" Here could not foes extinguish Virtue's flame,
" Nor growing Liberty o'erwhelm,

" Leaving this ambush, girt with reeds,
" Full oft our fathers, to the increase

" Of urging ills opposed adventurous deeds,
" And vengeance dreadful, though unknown ;

" Till happier triumphs teem'd, for wearied Woe,
" The friendly refuge, and the fruits of Peace.

" Then near the pathless marsh still honour'd flow
" Ye streams of Parret and of Thone." *

* " The greatest inconvenience Alfred laboured under
" in this place arose from a scarcity of provisions, of
" which the following story, told by all the old historians,

“ is a proof. It happened one day during the winter,
 “ which proved uncommonly severe, that he had sent all
 “ his attendants out to endeavour to procure fish, or some
 “ kind of provisions ; so difficult was the enterprize es-
 “ teemed, that the King and Queen only were excused
 “ from the employment. When they were gone, the
 “ King, as was his custom whenever he had an oppor-
 “ tunity, took a book, and began reading, whils^t Elswi-
 “ tha was employed in her domestic concerns ; they had
 “ not long continued thus engaged, before a poor pil-
 “ grim, accidentally passing that way, knocked at the
 “ gate, and begged they would give him something to
 “ eat. The humane King called to Elswitha, and de-
 “ sired her to give the poor man part of what provision
 “ there was in the fort : the Queen finding only one
 “ loaf, brought it to Alfred, to shew how slender their
 “ store was, at the same time representing the distresses
 “ the family would labour under, should they return from
 “ their foraging unsuccessful. The King, not deterred
 “ by this scanty view from his charitable purposes, but
 “ rather internally rejoicing at this trial of his humanity,
 “ cheerfully gave the poor Christian one half of the loaf ;
 “ consoling the Queen with this religious reflection—
 “ That he who could feed five thousand with five loaves
 “ and two fishes, could make (if it so pleased him) that
 “ half of the loaf suffice for more than their necessities.

“ When the traveller departed, the King returned to his
 “ reading, and felt that satisfaction which most surely
 “ results from a beneficent action. Nor was it long un-
 “ rewarded, for his companions returned with so great a
 “ quantity of provisions, that they were not exposed to
 “ any similar inconveniences during their seclusion.”

Bicknell's Life of Alfred.

ELEGY

ON THE DEPARTURE OF MISS P—— AND J——
CH—— FROM PHILADELPHIA IN 1783, TO
ATTEND THEIR MOTHER, INDISPOSED IN THE
COUNTRY.

THE wintry gale through air its progress takes,
Deep-searching Delaware's arrested wave ;
On the bared oaks collected, icy flakes
Succeed the garb a milder season gave :

No flock, nor lowing herd, enraptured, feeds ;
Nor Nature's voice, and Love's, salute the grove,
While duty far the youthful sisters leads
To fields, whence late the gathering tempests
drove.

With other objects, tinged by Summer's ray,
Resplendent pair, the general scene could charm,

When he, who plaintive sings, an earlier day,
With you beheld, nor dreaded Grief's alarm.

Soft whispering breezes, as the bank we trod,
Moved here the stream, there shook the trembling
boughs,
And round your steps, on wing, and round their God,
The Loves, your captives vaunting, summ'd
their vows.

Then Life's glad face, and Vegetation's smiles,
Then cloudless heavens allured the admiring eye,
The river's surface smooth, its shaded isles,
And mineral springs * its distant shores supply.

Thus, when to poets old the vernal beam
Unveil'd each opening bloom, and checker'd
shade,

Fair Naïds, brightest guardians of the stream,
In rapturous vision near Ilissus stray'd.

Now Disappointment mocks the curious gaze ;
Nor all, as late, with female grace conspires,

* At Bristol.

Or, with yourselves, exalting to due praise
Your kindred fair, e'en coldest bosoms fires.

No more, the station * sought, amused you note
Each group, slow-moving o'er the river's bed ;
Nor Verdure's charms delight, nor roofs remote,
Nor floating toils, with patient ardour spread.

Such pleasures vanish'd, other comforts, hid
Ere, man to bless, Refinement sways the earth,
By Time unconquer'd, and to fade forbid,
Even Winter soothe, with animating Mirth.

O'er wide stretch'd capitals, when Darkness reigns,
And longer waves, in keener air, her wing,
Art boasts of haunts that rival fragrant plains,
Nor leave a sigh for Daylight and for Spring.

See, from the winds secure, and drifted heaps
Of dreary snow, the social bands repose :
Pale Fear, his phantoms chased by tapers, sleeps,
And vanquish'd Night † to lone recesses goes.

* The ferry.

† Vincunt funalia noctem. VIRG.

Shelter'd by lofty domes, a mingled troop
Confess, in mimic acts, Life's faithful draught ;
The Passions fiercely rage, and sadly droop,
Or transient Follies feel the comic shaft.

To forms of native symmetry the dance
Gives motion here, and Posture's every grace ;
Here choral notes the yielding soul entrance,
And in imaginary Eden place.

Here Reason raises, Wit relieves Discourse ;
Narration Wonder wakes, and still Suspense ;
Or Sentiment unlocks a calmer source ;
Or Laughter recreates unbending Sense.

From these ye fled, fair Nymphs. Ye fled ! The lyre
Straight, at the word, in heavier measures moans ;
More sounds, for you first waked, its solemn wire
With deep vibrations, and with tardy tones.

More thrilling throes the voice, the hand, the heart
Of Anguish prompt, and frame the sorrowing song,
That hour to mourn, which saw you hence depart,
So late our pleasure, and our pride so long.

Can equal joy, denied your presence, bless,
Or when Sol's ray the rapid sled directs ;
Or, in the illumined dome, adorn'd by dress,
When China's herb our nightly band collects ?

Nor small the pain, where Admiration warms,
To fly those hearts, become by worth our own ;
Witness the crowds that your attractive forms
Beheld enamour'd, and regretted groan.

But hark ! new murmurs Friendship's voice proclaim.

(As Love, o'er Friendship boundless merits rule)

" Let not," it cries, " though pure the virtuous aim,
" My vivid glow preceptive duty cool.

" Be own'd her honours ; be obey'd her laws :
" Still shall, where'er the zones * of heaven extend,
" From east to west, my name deserve applause,
" And Truth and Fable celebrate the Friend.

" Haste then, when Filial Love forbids no more
" The blameless deed, and will parental seals ;

* *Æneid*, lib. 8. ver. 225.

" True to the temperate flame that fired before,

" Here seek the enjoyment my adorer feels.

" Here (for from places whence ye flew I call)

" The enlivening objects wait, that round shall
rise,

" Welcomes sincere, the tribute due from all,

" And lighten'd bosoms, and rekindled eyes."

SONNET

ON A VERY TAME PIGEON, WHICH HAD DIED
FROM PICKING UP SOME POISONOUS SUB-
STANCE.

PRIDE of the race, once sacred held by Greece
To Love, and honour'd in the poet's strain ;
(Though now thy frolic flights, required in vain
Among these flowers, and check'd by Sickness,
cease,

Nor sound, with snowy plumes, the shades of Peace,
Each haunt of Leisure sought, his glance to gain) ;
Even Instinct's social tie shall Memory deign
To reverence, and from dumb Neglect release.

"Thine,"* oft I said (nor hoped so near thy end)
"Are all things round ; the groves and cloudless
"sky :

"While cheers the enlivening ray, sport and en-
"joy.

"Thine are yon oaks, that o'er the stream impend,
"And rocks that, as I stray with musing eye,
"Or wonder from the shed, can never cloy."

* Anac. Ode 33.

SONNET

WRITTEN ON MOUNT MERLIN, IN WALES,

1796.

FAMED hill, that, as Tradition tells, wouldst show
To lonely Merlin, hence around display'd,
Thesè varied beauties; mountains with their
shade,

Far reaching, and meandering streams below;
Thou, to whose summit, Fate's decrees to know,
Ere Love his footsteps to the lake * convey'd,
High chiefs, 'tis sung, their eager journies made,
Now on such godlike gifts none faith bestow.

* — the Lady of the Lake,
Whom long he loved, for him in haste did send.

In the mean time, through that false ladies traine,
He was surprised, and buried under beare,
Ne ever to his work return'd againe.

Fairie Queen, B. 3. c. 3. stanza 9.

Yet though my country, for a thousand years,
Were taught its doom, what warning more desired,
Or truer, could from hallow'd caverns sound,
Than this ; " unfriended by his faithless fears,
Baseness shall rue the boon his prayers acquired,
And Valour be, alone, by Fortune crown'd ?"

EPIGRAMS.

EPIGRAM

ON THE RIGHTS OF WOMEN.

WHEN English law on new foundations rose,
And Alfred gloried in his realm's repose,
Justice, that saw, amazed, the finish'd work,
Broke forth, one fancied blemish seen to lurk :
" And shall harsh rules devote the race's flower ?
" Nor Beauty's favourites boast an equal power ?
" Here I condemn—But hold ; the rash complains,
" And still wise Providence aright ordains :
" Though part seem injured, all must win respect—
" True ; Man *shall* act, but Woman *may* direct."

EPIGRAM

ON THE FIRE AT THE OPERA HOUSE.

VANBRUGH, the roof to trills responsive falls,
And flames yield only to thy sturdy walls.

Each noble's seat, who chanting chiefs approved,
 Their palaces, though now, with groves, removed;
 The flutes, or strings, by whose assistant charms
 They sooth'd with love, or terrified with arms;
 Their vestments, Rome's, or Persia's proud attire,
 All seized alike by the relentless fire,
 And females scared, and eunuchs, as they run,
 Appease the shades of Pope and Addison.

EPIGRAM

ON THE IMPORTANCE OF A TRIFLE.

You paint great changes, come, in France, to pass;
 I think but of my loss—a spying-glass.
 Yet scarce more justly did the Cyclops sigh,
 Spoil'd by Ulysses of his single eye.

EPIGRAM

ON A FAILURE OF STUCCO.

CALL'D to restore the structure's outward grace,
 That plaster whiten'd, and its wrecks deface;

The artist asks, "which shed did time subdue?"
"Which shed?" replies its owner, "'tis the new."

EPIGRAM.

A CONSOLATION OF AVARICE.

SPOUSE of unfetter'd heart, though now a wife
In wedlock's bands has fasten'd thee for life;
Her features mean some good forebode thee still,
And looks repulsive, that with terror thrill:
To flattering crowds let tempted Beauty yield;
Thy rights are guarded by a Gorgon shield.

EPIGRAM

ON A LOVE MATCH.

CHREMES, thy son with kindness still behold,
Though, warm to Beauty, Wealth confess him cold.
Beauty from Beauty springs: no more rebuke—
Thy winning grandchild may espouse a duke.

EPIGRAM

ON THE ILLUMINATIONS, IN CONSEQUENCE
OF HIS MAJESTY'S RECOVERY.

A MONARCH's health, suspended long, to greet,
And speak at once the joy of many a street,
As Darkness spreads, all London kindling soon,
The wheels are guided by the blaze of Noon.
Taste each gay form of order'd light surveys,
And Science every hue the prism displays.

EPIGRAM.

THE SUPPOSED REFLECTION OF ONE, WHO FAIL-
ED IN HIS APPLICATION FOR PREFERMENT
AT A GREAT COURT.

SCARCE could I think that rough address, and face,
A Courtier's, till refused my promised place.

EPIGRAM

ON WINDSOR'S BECOMING THE RESIDENCE
OF THE COURT.

THE seat of Edward well befits the train,
Whose pomp adorns a prosperous Ruler's reign.
There, beneath forests, cherish'd Commerce stems
The untroubled waters of the silent Thames;
And just the City's spires are seen, to grace
With suited majesty, the reverend place.
There too the field * of Freedom, at whose sight
John erst had shrunk, a Brunswick may delight.

EPIGRAM.

THE PROSELYTE.

YOU'VE preach'd away my notions vain
From texts in the Apostle Paine.
No longer unenlighten'd zeal
For England's glory do I feel;

* Runnymede.

No longer sum, with swelling heart,
Her feats in War, and wreaths of Art;
Her poets charming every age,
And truth unfolded by her sage.
The city long I wish'd to last,
Become as beauteous as 'tis vast:
But careless now, whene'er I can,
With clubbists hail the Rights of Man,
Discourse, still treating of the theme,
Shall prove, on this I think and dream
From morn till eve, from dusk till dawn:
Fear not—but pardon if I yawn.

EPIGRAM.

A HUSBAND'S APOLOGY.

HOWEVER stoutly you maintain
That damages are solid gain,
My duel, I contend, was right:
What are horns given for, but to fight?

EPIGRAM

ON READING AN ESSAY UPON POLITICAL
JUSTICE.

BRITON, admonish'd of the fate
That threatens us, the ship of state
Rescue from danger, with all hands;
Nor strike upon the G—dw—n sands.

EPIGRAM

ON SOME POEMS, AND A PAMPHLET, PUBLISH-
ED NEAR THE SAME TIME, BY THE SAME
AUTHOR.

YOUR rhymes are good, I own ; but, —,
I cannot think your reasons valid.

EPIGRAM

ON THE SAME SUBJECT.

YOUR prose, so fanciful and terse,
So just the doctrines of your verse;

For profit we may read your rhyme,
And with your pamphlet kill the time.

EPIGRAM

ON RECEIVING A GEM OF NEWTON, ENGRAVED
FOR THE AUTHOR BY MARCHANT.

WELL hast thou, Marchant, toil'd to do thy part,
And grace the country with Athenian art.
Now Architecture plans, as George commands,
New wonders here, new praise in distant lands;
Painting perceives her own no vulgar doom;
And Sculpture's recent boasts astonish Rome.
Nor less the nicer skill, with pride, we see
Of old Pergoteles display'd by thee.
Arts banish'd, that on Louis fame bestow'd,
And to brute Force her only triumphs owed,
The works, whose merit rare no age disputes,
Let France *purloin*, while Britain *executes*.

EPIGRAM

ON THE SUCCESES OF THE ARCHDUKE, 1796.

If Austria e'er her tarnish'd fame deplore,
The royal Brothers shall be then no more :
Scarce danger Justice for a land affrights,
Which Honour rules, and for which COURAGE
fights.

EPIGRAM

ON THE COMMERCIAL TREATY WITH AMERICA.

The vast Atlantic, that so wide
Once roll'd, the nations to divide,
Joins them, in happy hour allied.*

* And seas but join the nations they divide.

POPE. Windsor Forest.

TRANSLATIONS.

PETRARCH.

PART I.

POEMS DURING THE LIFE OF LAURA.

SONNET.

'Twas that dim day * the Sun's relenting rays,
In pity of a God, their splendour veil'd,
When with firm chains all unaware assail'd,
Thy glances bound me, too intent to gaze.
No risk I dreaded from the treacherous ways
Of Love, bright fair, and arms that oft prevail'd,
Till, unsuspecting victim, I bewail'd,
Too late, the common doom, with vain amaze.

* The day is recorded as being at April 6th, 1327.
This conceit is imitated at the opening of Milton's fine
ode on Christmas day, and by no means rendered less of
a conceit.

Love found me a disarm'd and helpless foe,
Swift at my heart directing, through these eyes,
The shaft, that opes their sluices sad for life.
Nor was it valiant, sure, by mean surprise
My feeble and unguarded power to o'erthrow,
Yet from thy front retire, prepared for strife.

SONNET

TO STEPHEN COLONNA THE ELDER.

O GLORIOUS Column,* by whose strength are
stay'd
Our ardent hopes, and Latium's name divine ;
That, from thy path, and Conduct's certain line,
Jove ne'er has daunted, by his storms dismay'd ;
† No palace, theatre, or porch's shade,
But, in their stead, a fir, a beech, a pine,
O'er the green turf, and heights, whose charms
adjoin,

* Alluding to the Italian word Colonna.

† Petrarch, when this nobleman was at Avignon, had eagerly made inquiries of him, to which this alludes, concerning the remains of ancient magnificence at Rome, which his patriotism made so interesting to him.

And mounting, or descending, poets aid,
From earth to heaven here lift the ravish'd mind :
And the sweet nightingale, in thickest grove
That pours each eve her ditty, and complains,
O'ercomes the heart with thoughts of saddest love.
Only Joy's measure is by thee confined,
My noble friend, whose absence Fate ordains.

SONNET *

ON PLANTING A LAUREL, NEAR A RIVULET, IN
HONOUR OF LAURA, IN A SPOT WHICH SHE
FREQUENTED.

If yet thou glow'st, Apollo, with that fire
Which once in Thessaly thy breast inflamed,
And, for the bright-hair'd beauty's charms so
famed,
Hast not, at length, forgotten thy desire ;

* The resemblance, in their names, of the laurel tree
and his mistress, had so struck the imagination of Pe-
trarch, that, in his poems, Daphne, Laura, and the laurel,
become synonymous terms.

From the cold frosts, and wint'ry winds, whose ire
Is, when thou hidest thy majesty, proclaim'd,
Protect the sacred plant, with reverence named,
By which I too, ensnared, to Love aspire.

And, for that amorous hope, which sooth'd of old
Thy pain, and made thy life less sadly pass,
From this unhealthy moisture purge the air.

Soon with what wonder shall we both behold,
By her own arms, far reaching o'er the grass,
So proudly shaded, our much-honour'd fair!

BALLAD.

I SEE the obtrusive veil (be it confess'd!)
Alike in sunshine and in shade,
Obdurate fair one, carefully display'd,
Well prove thou know'st the secrets of my breast.
Ere yet the oppressive passion was reveal'd,
That daily dooms me to Affliction's load,
Relenting Pity soften'd in thy look;
But, when thy power my agitation shew'd
Those locks admired were suddenly conceal'd,
And glances interrupted from me took
Relief, whose absence I but ill can brook.

H

Thus am I govern'd by a veil,
That from me, whether cold or heat assail,
Hides the bright eyes that have so often bless'd.

SONNET.

WHENE'ER, among the comrades of the dame,
Bright Love approaches in her beauteous mien,
As much as each beneath her charms are seen,
Swells my desire, and grows the excited flame.
The place, the hour I bless, and happiest name,
When on Worth's height I gazed, with wonder
keen;

And say, "my soul, that such thy boast has been,
" To the kind gods unmeasured thanks proclaim,
" From her the love-created fancies spring,
" That point to Heaven's perfection, and calm
joy;

" Not the unworthy cares that man employ :
" From her derived, do the pure raptures buoy
" Thy thought, and lift thee to the immortal ring ;
" Which yet I seek, on Hope's aspiring wing."

SESTINA.*

To every animal that dwells on earth,
Unless those few that dread the blazing sun,
Fate has allotted, for their toil, the day ;
But, when the heavens are lighted by the stars,
Some hie to sheds for shelter, some to woods,
There to enjoy their wish'd repose till morn.

And I, as soon as I behold the morn
Dispersing round the dews and shades o'er earth,
And calling forth the beasts from all the woods,
Perceive no cheerful influence in the sun ;
Then, when I flaming see the nightly stars,
I only weep, and languish for the day.

When dusky evening then succeeds the day,

* The lines of the Sestina terminate, in every stanza, in the same words, of *two* syllables ; but, from the structure of an Italian verse, those words seem properly rendered by a monosyllable in English.

Within this land, and makes another's morn,
Pensive I gaze at the relentless stars,
That fashion'd me from much too feeling earth ;
And curse the day I first beheld the sun,
By which I seem a savage in the woods.

I truly think no beast has, in the woods,
Appear'd so terrible, by night or day,
As she I sigh for, where'er shines the sun ;
Nor do I pause for evening, or for morn ;
For, though I am a mortal piece of earth,
The strong desire I feel is from the stars.

Before I may ascend to you, bright stars,
Or seek below the lover's myrtle woods,
Leaving my body, then but mouldering earth,
May I obtain her pity ! Joy, one day,
Will balance years of pain, and ere the morn,
Content, announced me by the setting sun.

With her first witness'd by the setting sun,
Might I remain, and only see the stars
During one night, and might it ne'er be morn ;
Nor might she, to that honour of the woods

Transform'd, escape my love, as on that day,
When Phœbus follow'd her below on earth.

But deep in earth, my coffin from the woods
Brought, I should lie, and day exhibit stars,
Ere such a glorious morn display the sun.

SONNET

ON SENDING TO A FRIEND A PAIR OF PIGEONS,
WHICH, BEING THEN FREQUENTLY EMPLOY-
ED IN FIELD SPORTS, HE HAD CAUGHT WITH
NETS.

FREE, at the foot of that well-peopled hill,*
On which the unrivall'd beauty had been born,
Ere him who sends us, captives thus forlorn,
She troubled, waking oft, and weeping still,
We pass'd our lives, and wing'd the air at will;
Nor less had any creature cause to scorn
Its fate, nor any sign appear'd, to warn
Us, thoughtless wretches, of approaching ill.
But, after those enjoyments we possess'd,

* Where Avignon was situated.

Yet, at the rueful pass we have attain'd,
Awaiting Death, we still on Hope can rest :
By the sweet prospect of revenge sustain'd,
We see our captor pining too, oppress'd
By Love, and by more fearful fetters chain'd.

SONNET

TRAVELLING THROUGH THE FOREST OF
ARDEN.

THROUGH this inhospitable, shaggy wild,
Even terrible to those begirt with arms,
I pass securely, whom my Sun alarms
Alone, Love's dreaded influence beaming mild ;
And sing, in self-command a very child,
Her whom my fancy, blind to threaten'd harms,
Sees, with her comrades fair, supreme in charms.
The firs and beeches, by its force beguiled,
I think her train ; I hear her, when I hear
The branches rustle, the fond birds complain,
And rapid rivulets murmur through the mead.
Grateful with gloom and silence might appear
These lonely woods, and soothing to my pain,
Did I not now my Sun's glad presence need.

SONNET.

THE loneliest fields, a pensive wanderer grown,
I tread, with solitary steps and slow,
And round my anxious eyes, inquiring, throw,
The tracks of men to avoid, wherever shewn.
No other means are to Invention known
From looks too curious to conceal my woe,
For in my secret breast what passions glow
Each gesture tells, and what I still bemoan.
Thus mountains now, methinks, and silent plains,
Thus woods, thus rivers, learn that rueful state,
Which I from every living witness hide :
Yet neither wild nor rugged path restrains
Intrusive Love, that, sent by cruel Fate,
Still walks, and still discourses, by my side.

SONNET

ON THE RECOVERY OF LAURA FROM A
DANGEROUS ILLNESS.

Now was the star of Venus in the east
Seen high, and that which could so jealous make

Imperial Juno, view'd its place to take
Among the northern fires, admired not least.
The industrious housewife, timely slumber ceased,
Her dress scarce huddled on, was bent to rake
The smother'd embers ; nor less soon awake,
The Lover on his pleasing pain to feast ;
When my fair mistress, in her sad estate,
Enter'd my thoughts ; not by the accustom'd way,
Which Sleep kept closed, as Sorrow had bedew'd ;
(How changed, alas, her looks !) and seem'd to say,
" Take heart, be hopeful of a better fate :
" These eyes by you will, as they wont, be view'd.

O D E

TO STEPHEN COLONNA THE YOUNGER, MADE
SENATOR OF ROME FOR FIVE YEARS.

HEROIC spirit, that thy seat on high
Hast left, to animate terrestrial clay,
And form a mortal, prudent, bold, and wise ;

* Before the publication of the *Memoires de Petrarque*, it was supposed most generally to be addressed to Rienzi, the famous tribune.

Since thou hast now attain'd the sovereign sway,
And canst in Rome the arts of empire try,
To bid it to its ancient honour rise,
On thee, I call; for, save in thee, my eyes
Perceive not Virtue (which from earth seems flown)
Nor even the very shame that Vice inspires.
Howe'er now Italy a change desires
Or seeks, her state seems to herself unknown,
Decrepit, dull, and torpid grown.
Is she in everlasting slumber bound?
O might my vigour lift her from the ground!

No; she will never, from her slumber deep,
Grasp'd by her hair, at such a warning voice,
Be rouz'd: such heaviness ensures her doom!
But doubtless 'tis by Heaven's peculiar choice
That thou, whose efforts can dispel her sleep,
Hast, in thy care, her head, our honour'd Rome.
Firm in those venerable locks presume
To plant thy hand, that now dishevell'd* trail,
Till the raised sluggard on her feet be set.
I, that her sufferings day and night regret,
Hope only by thy labours to prevail.

* This alludes to the disunited state of Rome.

If Mars's people do not fail
Their elevated aims revived to see,
That high advantage will be due to thee.

Those ancient walls, the pilgrim yet beholds
With pleasure and with dread, when times long
past,

And many splendid triumphs he revolves;
With tombs of those, whose actions will outlast
Even what man's perishable dust infolds,
Famed till the fabric of the world dissolves;
And whate'er works one ruin now involves,
Warn thee Rome's ancient glories to renew.

Just Brutus, warlike Scipios, when, though rare,
One rules, who makes it, in these days, his care,
What joy shall, in the shades, descend to you!
How, ravish'd at the tidings new,
Will old Fabricius triumph, and exclaim,
" My Rome again shall spread abroad its fame!"

And if ethereal spirits can endure
Their thoughts from scenes celestial to estrange,
And meditate on what is done below;
Grieved at long civil feuds, from thee a change

They now expect, while, ever insecure,
To worship Heaven none unmolested go;
And places, once so sacred, dwellings grow
Of violence, and seem but dens of thieves.
There entrance only is refused the good;
And, where the shrines and altars lately stood
So rich, the world new horrors plann'd per-
ceives,

He scarce, who knew the past, believes,
And bells excite to arms, that only hung
Aloft, the signal of Devotion, rung.

The weeping Female Train, with clamour loud,
Weak Age and Childhood, whom the light of day
Grieves, and whate'er abhorr'd Existence shews;
Religious Brothers, white, and black, and gray;
And all, however by Affliction bow'd,
Call out, "O mighty Chief, relieve our woes!"
The wretches such unnumber'd harms disclose,
As, in a ruthless Hannibal, would wake
Pity for hated Rome: and, if we search
Around the fire that wraps the holy church,
Soon shall we see the fuel whence to take,
And how the blaze less powerful make;

The blaze of Passion, that so wide extends :
Do this ; Heaven's blessing on the deed attends,

Though bears,* wolves, lions, eagles, serpents, all
Should try against a marble Column born,
To shake it, ill their strength the attempt would suit.

That senseless rage see Rome afflicted mourn,
And on thy active virtue loudly call,
Poor plants, with ardour, from the soil to root,
Bless'd, in a thousand years, with little fruit.

Those lofty spirits are not now beheld,

That made her glorious, as she was before ;

O race, whose breasts, with anger I deplore,
Are now, against so great a mother, swell'd !

But thou, her father, husband, held,

Thy succour bring ; for such good deeds, by one†
She claims alike, will now be left undone.

* The bears mean the Orsini family, from the word Orso. The rest are supposed to mean those families who united with them, in opposition to the Column, Colonna.

† "The Pope," as Gesualdo explains in his note, "who lives at Avignon, attentive to the spiritual government, and not the republic, and is quite given up to luxury, indifferent to the fate of Rome and Italy."

Seldom it happens that, to high designs

Propitious, Fortune cares the just reward
Of Worth to allot, as she now seeks to do:

But favours, with her rule that ill accord,
Scarce granted thee, to pardon so inclines,
I see her wrongs with patience, though not few.
The worthies of whom history boasts, ne'er knew

A road so clear to everliving Fame;
For thou preparest the Monarchy's return
To former greatness, if I well discern

True merit, kindled by its generous aim.
How will this praise exalt thy name,
"Others, its youth assisting, raised the state;
"He, while it totter'd beneath age's weight?"

On the Tarpeian hill thou wilt behold,

My song, a Chief, all Italy esteems,
Of others' good more thoughtful than his own.
Tell him, that one, to whom he is unknown,

Save by applauding Fame, yet worthiest seems,
Thus says, "with tears, pour'd forth in streams
"Through faded eyes, on thee does Rome, from all
"Her seven famed hills, for just compassion call."

MADRIGAL.*

A FOREIGN beauty touch'd my heart, whose face,
Love's genuine badge, declared her of his train.
(All others seem'd less worthy of her place.)
Whom following along the verdant grass,
These words I caught, at distance utter'd plain.
"Thou with lost labour through the wood wilt pass
"On this pursuit." Then in the shade I stood
Of a tall beech, and mused awhile, till soon
I saw around what dangers in the wood
Beset me, and return'd content at Noon.†

* Supposed the description of a warning, which he thinks effectual, from his confessor, father Dennis ; who wrote to him, that it was unbecoming to lose his time, by the consequences of his passion.

† This allegory had been used by Dante. He means by Noon, the age of thirty-five years, as being half the age of a man, and likewise his own at that time.

SONNET.*

ON A MINIATURE OF LAURA, PAINTED FOR PETERARCH BY SIMON, A DISCIPLE OF GIOTTO.

THAT master, Policletus, and the rest
Whom History boasts, exerting all their art
A thousand years, could only shew a part
Of the unrivall'd grace that fires my breast;
But, surely, Simon, in the regions bless'd,
Had seen the beauteous sovereign of my heart,
And thus, among the sons of earth, we start
To see her lineaments so fair express'd.
This face is of some being in the sky,
A semblance true; not one, like us, whose soul
Is veil'd by cumbrous flesh from every eye:
My friend judged well, who could not form a whole
So various, where, less aided than on high,
The impediments of earth his sight control.

* This and the following sonnet, are those which Vasari speaks of, as a modern connoisseur would of Pope's epistle to Jervis; or, in other words, as a compliment paid by an eminent poet to an indifferent artist.

SONNET.

THE SAME SUBJECT.

WHEN Simon first the precious work design'd,
That proved the wonders of his art for me,
O that his pencil could have bid me see
The senseless form endued with voice and mind!
My sighs less frequent I had joy'd to find,
Bereft of pleasure now, by Fate's decree;
For, in this picture, cruel though she be,
She bears a countenance to peace inclined:
And when all wildly I address my speech
To her, she seems to listen without pain,
And grant due pity, as I then beseech.
How might, Pygmalion, the reflection teach
To thee content; who couldst for ever gain
What I, one moment, wish within my reach!

SONNET.

SENNUCIO, let me tell thee how, kind friend,
I pass my days, and what a life is mine:

I burn as I was wont, condemn'd to pine
 For Laura, and with Passion's force contend;
 Here proud, here lowly, have I seen her bend
 On me her eyes; to harshness now incline,
 And now to pity; and her looks divine,
 Joyful or sad, to scorn or kindness tend.
 Here did she sweetly sing; here sate, and here
 Was seen to turn, or sudden stop: here thrill'd
 My soul with the bewitching look she gave:
 Here spoke, or smiled, as I stood wondering near;
 Or changed her air—with such reflections fill'd,
 Love day and night torments his hapless slave.

SONNET.

HIS REASON FOR LOVING LAURA AT THIRTY,
 WHEN HER BEAUTY WAS IMPAIRED.

HER golden locks were in the wind display'd,
 That blew them round a thousand graceful ways,
 While in her eyes an undiminish'd blaze
 Still beam'd; though now by Time less vivid made;
 And pity, as I thought, her looks display'd,
 But know not if, as true, it tempted praise:

I

That youth then fired my bosom, can it raise
 In any wonder, with such fuel's aid?
 'Twas not the motion of a mortal's form,
 But something heavenly, and her speech's sound,
 Unlike to what we hear on earth below.
 'Twas some pure spirit; a bright sun, around
 Appearing then to beam its influence warm;
 Nor *can it heal the wound to unstring the bow.

SONNET.

ON PETRARCH'S PICKING UP A GLOVE LAURA
 HAD DROPPED AT AN ASSEMBLY, AND WHICH
 SHE HASTILY RECOVERED FROM HIM.

O BEAUTEOUS hand, that robb'st me of my heart,
 Shewing whate'er I prize in narrow space;

* This line was chosen, a century afterwards, for his motto, by a king of Naples, on his queen's death.

“ Le roi Rène apres la mort d'Isabeau de Lorraine,
 “ sa premiere femme, prit cette devise :

“ Un arc turquois avec la corde rompue, et le dernier
 “ vers de ce sonnet :

“ Piaga per allentar d'arco non sana.”

MEM. DE PETRARQUE.

To form which, Nature in her work would place,
 For her own fame, and Heaven's, her utmost art:
 Clear, pearly whiteness that, o'er every part
 Conspicuous, givest to killing fingers grace,
 Know, Love consents my eager eyes should trace,
 Beauties late hid, a destined joy to impart.
 Thou snowy, fair embroider'd, graceful glove,
 Yet mourn'd, where ivory shines and roses glow,
 Too oft, who could an equal prize divine?
 Thus might the veil become a spoil of Love!
 O strange vicissitude of things below,
 I have possess'd the treasure—yet resign.

SONNET.

A SOLITARY life I ever sought,
 (The fields, the woods, and rivers know it well,)
 Flying those sordid souls, their stars compel
 To lose the path by Heaven and Virtue taught:
 And had my former project come to aught,
 Far from soft Tuscan * air, I now should dwell

* About the time of Petrarch's birth, his family was driven from Florence by an army of the French under

Where the wild hills around my river swell,
Sorga,* that nurses sad poetic thought;
But Fortune, always adverse to my views,
Keeps me where, uninspired, I sing, and grieve
To see my treasure,† in the mire is thrown.
Yet late my hand was destined not to lose
Its labour, but its full ‡ reward receive,
By Love, and by myself, and Laura, known.

Philip le Bel, by whom it was proscribed, as well as, among many others, the great Dante. Petrarch at seven months old was carried across the Arno, as Camilla was carried by Metabus, according to Virgil.

* He had by this time, as is here seen, established himself at Vacluse; the fountain of which has been poetically described on the spot by Sir William Jones, in his *Elegy on Laura*. See his *Poems*.

† Meaning Laura in the vicious city of Avignon.

‡ I have translated this unintelligible passage conformably to the idea of its general meaning, suggested by the author of the *Memoires de Petrarque*; supposing that Laura had condescended to shake hands with her lover.

ODE*

WRITTEN AT LAURA'S FAVOURITE FOUNTAIN.

LIMPID, cool, untainted spring,

Where her limbs she often laved

Whom only I acknowledge fair;

* The author of the *Memoires* argues very well to prove, that it was not the fountain of *Vaucluse*, as it was thought probably at the time *Sir William Jones* translated the ode with this opinion. As this therefore was, I believe, in his youth, it gives me a better excuse for translating it after one who, though he had a mind so comprehensive, yet had an ear equally harmonious. I may be excused, by the same reason, for seeing in some few parts, however beautiful the rest, a want of absolute perfection; and, in particular, for remarking, that at the beginning, it was not worth while to give the translation a sense *opposite* to the original, in order to suggest the idea of *warm water*. That the reader may completely judge of the carelessness of *Voltaire*, alluded to by *Sir William Jones*, in speaking of this ode, I refer him to the notes of the *Memoires de Petrarque*, Vol. II.

Boughs, that to remembrance bring

Sadly, as ye bending waved,
How her reclining form ye bare ;
Turf, and, worthiest to wear,

Flowers that, plucking, she disposed
O'er her robe and bosom seen ;
Air, enchantingly serene,

Where Love my wounds afresh unclosed ;
O attend while I complain,
Assembled here, to my last dying strain.

If, while I with Love apace

Pine, Heaven still, unpitying, choose
To see me victim proved of Grief,
Do not, in this haunt, a place
To my ashes cold refuse.

For when the spirit's fled, belief
They shall here repose, relief

Will at my last moments yield:
Here possess'd of Peace, in port
Mariners sea-wearied court,

Preserve them, by some stone reveal'd,
Sad remains of one whom woes
Had harass'd once, but left in safe repose.

Haply to her favourite spot
May the cruel fair return,
On whom all hopes I cherish rest ;
And, astonish'd, then my lot,
Casting round her eyes, discern,
Where I that day, for ever bless'd,
Hail'd entranced ; O then her breast
Love or Pity sure will touch,
And the soft, escaping sigh
Heard, to Heaven shall plead on high
For my long errors,* known too much ;
Drooping as the fair it spies,
And drying with her veil her beauteous eyes.

From the flaunting branches fell
Scatter'd leaves of many a flower
On her, who cast an angel's look,
Sitting, I remember well,

* The turn given to this passage is countenanced by the commentary in Vellutello's edition. It is suitable likewise to the poet's customary censure of his passion, and to the spirit of his introductory sonnet, " Voi ch'as-
" coltate in rime sparse," &c.

Cover'd with the amorous shower.
Some upon her robe they shook ;
Some their way to tresses took,
And as gems in gold appear'd :
On the fountain's margent green
Some were, early, settling seen ;
While others, o'er the soil revered,
Frolic circles form'd above,
And seem'd to cry, " Here reigns almighty
" Love !"

Often did I then exclaim,
Awed by her sweet presence, " Sure
" 'Tis one of the celestial band !"
So with air divine the dame,
With fair features, and the lure
Of magic smiles that none withstand,
Born our wonder to command,
Recollection charm'd away,
That, unconscious, with a sigh,
" Whence," I said, " and where am I ?"
And seem'd to Heaven convey'd that day.
Since it pass'd, no place can please
Save this ; here only I exist in ease.

If thou wert tuneful as sincere,
Boldly might'st thou quit, my song,
The woods, and mix among the courtly throng.

SONNET

EMBARKING ON THE PO, IN HIS WAY TO
VERONA.

WELL may'st thou bear these limbs, majestic Po,
At will, upon thy powerful, rapid waves;
But the free spirit that informs them braves
The strong compulsion of all power below,
And without need of skill, the way to show
To that bless'd branch,* whose presence still it
craves,
Hastening, itself with outstretch'd pinions saves
From thee, though wind and oars their aid bestow.
Great king of rivers, proud, presumptuous
stream,
That thwart'st† the Sun, when he brings on the day,

* Of laurel, *i. e.* Laura.

† The course of the Po being east, it moved towards
the sun, and from Laura.

And leav'st the West, though thence more radiance beam;
 Thou what is mortal of me may'st convey;
 But all the rest (nor thou, horn'd flood, misdeem)
 By Love is wing'd, and homeward takes its way.

SONNET

TRAVELLING HOMEWARDS FROM ITALY, ON
 THE BANKS OF THE RHONE.

O RAPID flood, that, from thy fountain hoarse,
 Through Alpine deserts *gnawing*,* whence thy
 name,
 Advancest night and day, our path the same,
 Where Love leads me, thee only Nature's course;
 Roll on (for sleep thou stay'st not, the resource
 Of human Toil) and ere the ocean's claim
 Thou yield, delay where greener meads proclaim,
 In a serener air, enchantment's force.
 There shines my living Sun with favouring ray,
 And gladdens, on thy left, the bordering flowers:
 Perhaps (O chance desired!) she mourns my stay.

* Deriving it from the Latin and Italian, "rodere."

Kiss her light feet, or hand, among those bowers.
Tell her (and let that kiss, like language, say)

* "My will is prompt, but tardy are my powers."

SONNET

ON THE GRIEF OF LAURA, SUPPOSED FOR
THE DEATH OF HER MOTHER.

I saw a simple mortal shew, at will,

Angelic graces, so endow'd alone :

The recollection dear, though sad, is grown,

Nor can aught else the mind so justly fill.

Yes ; tears I saw from sparkling eyes distil,

That Sol might envy, in full lustre shewn ;

And potent plaints seem'd utter'd, in a tone

To make the mountains move, and streams stand
still.

Grace, Feeling, Prudence, Dignity, and Grief,

Lamenting then, a sweeter concert made

Than blesses man, when Music yields relief ;

And so the air by Virtue's sound was sway'd,

It was attentive all, and not a leaf,

Stirring, one moment's careless pause betray'd.

* The scriptural expression is here softened.

SONNET

ON A DISTINCTION SHEWN TO LAURA BY A
PRINCE, SUPPOSED TO BE CHARLES SON OF
THE KING OF BOHEMIA, AND AFTERWARDS
THE EMPEROR CHARLES THE FOURTH.

ONE of rare powers, as of a royal race,
Unclouded judgment, and a lynx's eye,
Full in whose view the future seems to lie,
Has proved how little deeds his fame disgrace;
And, when gay dames assembled in the place
By mirth allotted for the occasion high,
Among so many beauteous, could espy,
Without confusion, the most perfect face.
The fair in crowds sought forth, polite as wise,
To Age and Rank superior, with his hand
He mark'd his wish, and with attentions due
Approaching, kiss'd her forehead and her eyes;
An honour, praised by all the unbiass'd band;
But filling me with envy at the view!

SONNET

ON A WATER-PARTY OF LADIES, AMONG WHOM
WAS LAURA, GOING DOWN THE RHONE IN A
BOAT, AND RETURNING IN A CARRIAGE.

TWELVE dames, with toil not unbecoming worn,
Rather twelve stars, and in the midst a Sun,
I saw sit gaily in a bark, that none
Ere equall'd, on a buoyant current born.

Seeking that sheep now Finery had shorn

To load its dress,* not Jason enter'd one
So glorious, nor the swain, by whom undone
Troy is yet doom'd its cruel fate to mourn.

In a triumphal car where, with delight,
All listen'd ; then my Laura to the rest

Sung sweetly, seated from the troop not far,
As home they moved. O what a glorious sight !
To steer the bark, how, Typhis, wast thou bless'd,
And thou Automedon, to guide the car.

* This is supposed to censure the fashions of the age.

SONNET.

THAT window where my Sun is often seen
Refulgent, and the world's at morning's hours ;*
And that, where Boreas blows, when Winter
lowers,
And the short days reveal a clouded scene ;
That bench of stone where, with a pensive mien,
My Laura sits, forgetting beauty's powers ;
Haunts where her shadow strikes the walls or
flowers,
And her feet press the paths or herbage green :
The place where Love assail'd me with success ;

* These particulars are related of Laura's house: Maurice de Seves, in 1540, says, that in the Fauxbourg of the Cordeliers, a small ancient house, built with yellow stone, was called Laura's house. It was watered by the Sorga, and was the second house to the left in the Fauxbourg, after passing the portail Peint. It adjoined to a tavern called the Cheval Blanc, and which was in existence not long before 1764, the date of the *Memoires de Petrarque*.

And Spring, the fatal time that, first observed,
Revives the keen remembrance every year ;
With looks and words, that o'er me have preserved
A power, no length of time can render less,
Call to my eyes the sadly-soothing tear.

PETRARCH. PART II.

POEMS

AFTER THE DEATH OF LAURA.*

O D E.

If thou would'st have me suffer, Love, thy yoke,
Again (thy wish I see) new power begin
To shew, and fame unwonted win,
Lest at the trial I appear unbroke.
Fly to the sacred grave, and warm within
That heart, the seat of Virtue, and these eyes
Cheer with that mortal, fair and wise,
Whose loss now beggars, as she made me bless'd.
Yes; if 'tis justly by the world confess'd
Thy power to Heaven, and to the dark abyss
Below extends, (alas! in tracts remote,
Or other worlds, if we but note
That power surmised, we feel its force in this!)

* The day is mentioned in 1327, when Petrarch first saw Laura; and she died on the same day, in 1348.

Snatch from the cruel King his beauteous prey;
Again thy banners where she looks display.

Kindle those matchless eyes, again to beam,
Which were my honour'd guide, and the soft
flame

That cheer'd the gloom of life, the same
That slumbering warms. How would it waking
burn?

Never the wearied hart so eager came,
Athirst, to sip the fountain or the stream,
As I sought forth the charms, I deem
Will oft to mournful Memory return.

For sad Experience from the past may learn,
My raving thoughts are deaf to Reason's voice;

As among wildering ways decoy'd,
We follow one, till soon it mocks our choice.

Now at thy call to come I do not deign:
Beyond thy power presume no more to reign.

Let me again the tones harmonious hear,
(Truly to hear) I still in fancy can,
Which, when their magic work began,
The Passions lull'd, confess'd the power of song;

While thoughts distemper'd from the breast of
man

Were charm'd away, nor aught seem'd gloomy near.

By this my verse was made to appear

Above itself, ne'er since so sweet or strong:

And to the mind as faculties belong

To call up forms unreal, let my eyes

And ears their proper objects joy to find.

While others all, of every kind,

Are only near, my life I lightly prize.

Vainly dost thou thy singled victim doom,

While his first love is shrouded in the tomb.

Let the sweet glance returning bless my sight,

That soften'd my vain pride, as beams the snow;

And let my happy fortune show

Thee placed near her who sends them to my heart.

Swift take thy golden dart, and take thy bow;

Bring her pronouncing words that wake delight,

And hearing which I learn'd aright

How stored with captivating charms thou art.

Bid not her tongue be still; that winning part

Had baits around to lure me, and which still

I crave; and plant on every side a snare

Within her light and curling hair :
I cannot without this thy power allow.
Spread with thy hands those tresses to the gales ;
And then I may confess thy power prevails.

Ne'er might I from the golden snares be free
Of ringlets, left to charm with Nature's grace ;
Nor from the influence of that face
Which with its sweet severity intrall'd,
And busy Fancy still delights to trace ;
Which kept for ever love unchanged in me ;
As close to many a fading tree,
Those plants, of Venus and Apollo call'd !
But, since the gift of Liberty, appall'd
I have beheld, presented me by Death ;
And thou canst find none else, whoe'er thou
choose,
To second thy ambitious views,
My pride may dare thee till my latest breath.
Thy day is pass'd ; if thou have lost the arms
I dreaded once, thy rage no more alarms.

Those arms were vivid eyes, whence tipp'd with fire
Darts show'ring, well-directed by thy hand,

Which Reason could not e'er withstand,
Fulfill'd Heaven's will ; the charm of modest Mirth,
Or feeling Thought ; Silence ; or, at command,
Gay Laughter ; courteous ways that awe inspire ;
Chaste looks, and words we might desire
To banish Vice impure, as spells, from earth ;
An air, as seen in one of heavenly birth,
Mildly benevolent, and often praised ;
Grace, when she sate, or when she stood, in all
That doubt, which Memory can recall,
What winning posture most enchanted, raised ;
Possess'd of arms thus victory to insure,
Thou madest me yield ; but I am now secure.

O'er other souls Heaven gave thee power, to change
The object of their love in many ways ;
Mine, of a different mould, obeys
Another law, Heaven's varied works to show.
Yet howe'er gain'd, no joy does Freedom raise ;
But sad, I say, " O wont this region strange,
" Thy blissful mansion left, to range,
" What doom, pure spirit, plunging us in woe,
" Untimely call'd thee from the world below,
" Making regret arise from what we saw

"Of lofty Virtue, never equall'd yet?"——

I may not, Love, to thee submit,
Nor fear thy vengeance on my head to draw.
Thy bow thus strain'd, to pierce me vainly tries;
My safety's signal were her closing eyes.

Death has absolved me from thy laws,
O Love, since, for her heavenly dwelling, she
I mourn has left me sad and free.

SONNET.

How often to my long-beloved retreat
Hastening, where calm and peaceful all appears,
As soft I sigh, beneath my feeble feet
The well known sod I drench with trickling
tears!

How often, wandering from my lonely seat,
To the wood's wild recesses, free from fears,
My thoughts I rivet on that aspect sweet

Death veils, nor hence his stroke invited hears!
Now, in the form of Nymph or Goddess fair,
From Sorgia's waves emerging, while I gaze,
On the green bank I see her, seated there!

Now treading, as along the bank she strays,
The flowers, a beauteous mortal ; and her air
Tells me, with pity she my state surveys !

SONNET.

ZEPHYR returns, and the mild Season, seen
With herbs and flowers, his pleasing train, in
state ;
Procne is heard, soft Philomel her fate
Laments, and Spring's own colours grace the scene.
The laughing flowers delight, and heavens serene :
Jove on his fairest daughter looks elate :
All creatures warn'd, through space, obedient
wait
The will of Love, and own his impulse keen.
But, wretch, for me those sighs return alone
That with a wounded heart for her I send,
Who still in heaven retains it as her own :
And the sweet song of birds, and flowers that
blend
All hues, and woman's gentle manners, grown
Importunate, like deserts dread offend.

THE TWELFTH PYTHIAN ODE

OF

PINDAR.

TO MIDAS OF AGRIGENTUM, VICTOR ON THE

FLUTE.

1. 1.

PROFITIOUS hear, O happy seat .

Of social Joy, the fairest * own'd
Of earthly towns, and Proserpine's retreat ;
That placed, as on the banks enthroned
Of Agragas, behold'st thy vallies gay
With flocks and many a mirthful swain

* Mr. Green has omitted in his translation, the piece of history contained in the expression *καλλίστα βροτῶν πολέων*; but I thought that not an uninteresting one, which shewed the general opinion of Agrigentum with respect to *beauty*, probably just before the taste and policy of Pericles had rendered Athens so unrivalled in the productions of art.

Subject to thee, and prosper'd by thy sway ;
With Heaven's and Earth's kind will receive
my strain :

Receive too, Midas, him it crowns, who bore
From Greece that Art's respected prize,
Pallas (the Gorgon weltering in her gore),
Invented from the monstrous kindred's cries.

1. 2.

Sadly their voice the prostrate dead
Bemoan'd, when Perseus could subdue
One of the three fierce sisters, and her head
His trophy, with its serpents, view.
For feats regretted wide, the Chief arrived
At sea-girt Seriphus, his wandering ceased :
The race* of Phorcus high, of sight deprived,
And Polydectes,† shuddering at his feast,
His mother's charms a master's prize survey'd,
Owed to the son of Danaë, on that day,
Their mournful fate, when, safe through mightier
aid,
He bore Medusa's features fair away.

* The surviving Gorgons, Stheno and Euryala.

† A tribute being expected by this king from his
guests, Perseus appeared, carrying the head of Medusa.

2. 1.

To him they owed it, sprung from Love
Celestial, and the golden shower;
But when his foe the Goddess, from above,
Sees vanquish'd by her heavenly power,
From plaintive sounds, that o'er a sister wakes
Euryala, while pleased her ears
Drink in their sweetness, lasting laws she makes
To rule the enchanting Art that mortals cheers.
Soon, perfect by her dexterous toil, conferr'd
On man, and hence an honour'd art,
'Tis at the games, in winning accents, heard
To rouse with eager hope Ambition's heart :

2. 2.

Soft as the skilful breath is born
Through well wrought brass, and slender reeds,
That near the city * of the Graces, torn
From their old haunts, the beauteous meads
And woods, Cephisus laving moves along,
Are doom'd to witness festive joy and mirth
In the light dance, and in the fervid song.
Fame without toil is hopeless here on earth :

* Orchomenus, a city of Boeotia, sacred to the Graces.

Yet, unexpected oft, as late * to thee,
Success arrives,*and, by Heaven's awful will,
While oft the vain their labour fruitless see,
New prospects sad Despair with comfort fill.

TRANSLATION OF A LATIN ODE BY
GRAY,

O DOOM'D the barbarous seats with me
To visit, where disturb'd we see
Strife's restless look, and hear his sound,
And the gownmen bustle round ;

Say, how much better, in the shade
Of some old elm reposing laid,
In books all irksome thoughts to lose,
And invoke the friendly Muse ?

For oft I chase the thoughts away
Of Care, as o'er the fields I stray

* He had gained the victory, as the Scholiast says, after breaking his instrument.

In sweet poetic trance, and leave
Scarce the dewy scene at eve.

And in each hill, where'er I go,
Parnassus seems his woods to shew
Outstretch'd ; and in each fountain clear
Aganippe cool appear.

Spring and the sportive Nymphs have smiled
To spy me in recesses wild,
Scenting the violets, that there
Load with sweets the morning air ;

As, thrown at random on the grass,
I mark the playful current pass,
That, gently check'd by many a stone,
Sends a pleasing plaintive tone.

Thus, when the Season's earliest flowers
Were seen, I pass'd the artless hours,
As long as Zephyr to each eye
Free from clouds preserved the sky.

Nor yet I leave the fields, and ease ;
Nor Phœbus more would Clitie please.

(Though now the winds are cold and rude,
And the summer changing view'd.)

For when on rural labours gay,
On plains and hills, he shoots his ray,
Tinging the East with gold afar,
And purple, from his radiant car ;

Wistful I mark his wondrous course ;*
Nor less when, with abated force,
He spreads, where Calpe's rocks aspire,
Sweet his temper'd hues of fire :

Till by degrees his lustre grown
More languid, scarcely now are shown
The gaudy clouds, nor shortly seen,
Fades at once the landscape green.

O happy were I (nor might then
My fortune be to rise again!)

* This poetical idea is in a rejected stanza of the
Elegy.—

“ Him have we seen ————

“ With wistful eyes pursue the setting sun.”

If falling thus, in death so bless'd,
I could sink in peace to rest ↓

No envy should I bear the God,
When by his steeds Olympus trod
Beheld him, with whole rays on high
Dazzle each admiring eye.

LATIN ODE

WRITTEN AT THE GRAND CHARTREUSE, BY
THE SAME.

THOU guardian of the solemn place,
Whate'er thy name, (for none, I deem,
Of import light art thou, whose trace,
By Time adorn'd with awful grace,
Thy groves declare, and native stream.

And clearer far the God is seen
O'er pathless rocks, the desert height,
Or where, the craggy steeps between,
Wild waves enliven all the scene,
And foliage spreads the gloom of night,

Than had he, beneath roofs, forsooth,
From citron hewn, in gold the art
Of Phidias proved, and Sculpture's truth)
O hail! and to a wearied youth,
That calls thee, Quiet's balm impart.

Spots thus retired, and Silence sweet,
Should Fortune still my hopes deny;
And toss'd again where billows beat,
Compel me other toils to meet,
Unwilling, and the haven fly:

At least, O Power, the days of Age
Give me to pass, from hind'rance free,
Where Nature soothes Reflection sage;
And leave the loud dissentious rage
Of crowds, and life's anxiety.

FINIS,